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DANTE'S DIVINA COMMEDIA

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE

BY THE

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PREFACE

THIS prose translation of the *Divina Commedia* is intended primarily for readers who are not acquainted with Italian, and it is for their sake that the brief footnotes which accompany it have been added. I am in hopes, however, that it may also be found serviceable by students of the original work, and for their guidance the numbers of the lines of Dante's poem have been introduced in the page-headings. In making this translation my aim has been to render the Poet's meaning as fully and clearly as was in my power without adhering too literally to the words; and at the same time to present the poem in a fairly readable form. A similar task has already been undertaken by capable hands, and certainly I have no wish to challenge comparison with their work; but apology seems hardly necessary for renewing the attempt, because every one may without presumption hope to contribute something towards the more perfect translation of the future. While I have been engaged on this, I have abstained from consulting other English translations; but occasionally words or expressions have been introduced, which I had already

borrowed—chiefly from Cary and Longfellow—in my *English Commentary on Dante's 'Divina Commedia.'* From that work also the notes in the present volume have for the most part been derived.

The text which I have followed is Dr. Moore's Oxford text of the separate edition of the *Divina Commedia* (1900).

H. F. T.

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DANTE'S HELL

In Dante's cosmology the earth is at the centre of the universe and Hell a vast funnel-shaped cavity or reversed cone reaching from near the earth's surface to the centre, which is the centre of the universe, the farthest point from God. The sides of the cavity form a succession of concentric levels in diminishing circles as they approach the central depth, and on these levels the successive classes of the impenitent are punished, each lower circle punishing more severely a worse offence. Jerusalem, as the place of the Crucifixion, is the centre of the land hemisphere, in the line of the central axis of Hell. The other hemisphere is all water except for the island-mountain of Purgatory, at the antipodes of Jerusalem. Dante's journey is from the edge of the pit—we are not told where or how he enters it—down to the centre, and then, continuing in the same direction, up the bed of a subterranean stream to the shore of Purgatory.

It should be noted that in Dante's narrative 'here' means this present world, in which he tells his story, and 'there' the world of the dead. In dialogue, of course, this usage is reversed.

DANTE'S PURGATORY

DANTE'S Purgatory is a lofty island-mountain, the only land in the southern hemisphere, at the antipodes of Jerusalem. On the lower irregular slopes are the souls whose penitence has, for some reason, been delayed in life and whose purgation is now delayed. Above that is the gate of Purgatory proper, the place of active purgation, which consists of seven level terraces surrounding the mountain and rising one above another, connected by stair-ways in the rock. On these terraces the seven deadly sins are purged by penances from the souls that have been beset by them. On the summit of the mountain is the Garden of Eden, or Earthly Paradise, from which the purged souls ascend to Heaven.

DANTE'S PARADISE

FOLLOWING the Ptolemaic astronomy of his time Dante conceived of the earth as stationary and central in the universe, with the sun and moon and the five visible planets revolving about it at various speeds. Each of these seven heavenly bodies has its own sphere, or 'heaven'; beyond them is the sphere of the fixed stars, and beyond that the ninth and last of the material heavens, called the Crystalline because it is transparent and invisible, or the Primum Mobile because from its infinite speed the other lower heavens take their slower motions. These nine spheres are severally moved and controlled by the nine orders of the angels, and all the spheres and the heavenly bodies in them have certain spiritual significances and certain influences on human life and character. As Dante passes upward with Beatrice the souls of the blessed appear to them in the successive heavens according to their corresponding predominant character in their earthly lives. Beyond the nine material spheres is the Empyrean, outside of time and space, the heaven of God's immediate presence and the only real home of the angels and the redeemed, whose blessedness consists in their eternal vision of Him.

THE SYSTEM OF DANTE'S HELL

Neutrals

Circle 1. Virtuous Heathen

Incontinent
- „ 2. Lascivious
- „ 3. Gluttons
- „ 4. Avaricious and Prodigal
- „ 5. Wrathful

„ 6. Heretics

Violent — „ 7.
- (1) Violent against others
- (2) „ „ self
- (3) „ „ God, nature, and art

Fraudulent

„ 8. Simply Fraudulent
- (1) Panders and Seducers
- (2) Flatterers
- (3) Simonists
- (4) Diviners
- (5) Barrators
- (6) Hypocrites
- (7) Thieves
- (8) Fraudulent counsellors
- (9) Makers of discord
- (10) Falsifiers

„ 9. Treacherous
- (1) to kindred
- (2) to country and cause
- (3) to guests
- (4) to lords and benefactors

THE SYSTEM OF DANTE'S PURGATORY

The Earthly Paradise

The Terraces of Purgation
- Love Excessive
  - 7. The Lascivious
  - 6. The Gluttonous
  - 5. The Avaricious
- Love Defective
  - 4. The Slothful
- Love Perverted
  - 3. The Wrathful
  - 2. The Envious
  - 1. The Proud

Ante-Purgatory
- 4. Negligent Rulers
- 3. The Unabsolved
- 2. The Lethargic
- 1. The Excommunicate

THE SYSTEM OF DANTE'S PARADISE

The Ten Heavens

10. The Empyrean: the Holy Trinity, the Virgin, the Angels and the Saints
9. The Crystalline, or Primum Mobile: the Angelic Orders
8. The Fixed Stars: the Church Triumphant
7. Saturn: Temperance; Contemplatives
6. Jupiter: Justice; Rulers
5. Mars: Courage; Warriors
4. The Sun: Wisdom; Theologians
3. Venus: Love marred by wantonness
2. Mercury: Service marred by ambition
1. The Moon: Faithfulness marred by inconstancy

DANTE ALIGHIERI
(DURANTE DI ALIGHIERO DEGLI ALIGHIERI)
THE DIVINE COMEDY
BOOK I
INFERNO (HELL)
CANTO I

The dark wood; the sunny hill; the three beasts; Virgil

In the middle of the journey of our life[1] I came to myself within a dark wood where the straight way was lost. Ah, how hard a thing it is to tell of that wood, savage and harsh and dense, the thought of which renews my fear! So bitter is it that death is hardly more. But to give account of the good which I found there I will tell of the other things I noted there.

I cannot rightly tell how I entered there, I was so full of sleep at that moment when I left the true way; but when I had reached the foot of a hill at the end of that valley which had pierced my heart with fear I looked up and saw its shoulders already clothed with the beams of the planet that leads men straight on every road.[2] Then the fear was quieted a little which had continued in the lake of my heart during the night I had spent so piteously; and as he who with labouring breath has escaped from the deep to the shore turns to the perilous waters and gazes, so my mind, which was still in flight, turned back to look again at the pass which never yet let any go alive.

After I had rested my wearied frame for a little I took my way again over the desert slope, keeping always the lower foot firm; and lo, almost at the beginning of the steep, a leopard light and very swift, covered with a spotted hide, and it did not go from before my face but so impeded my way that I turned many times to go back.

The time was the beginning of the morning and the sun was mounting with those stars which were with it when Divine Love first set in motion those fair things,[3] so that the hour of the day and the sweet season moved me to good hope of escape from that beast with the gay skin; but, even so, I was put in fear by the sight of a lion which appeared to me and seemed to be coming against me holding its head high and furious with hunger so that the air seemed in dread of it, and of a she-wolf which appeared in its leanness to be charged with all cravings and which has already made many live in wretchedness. This last put such heaviness on me by the terror which came forth from its looks that I lost hope of the ascent; and like one who rejoices in his gains and when the time comes that makes him a loser has all his thoughts turned to sadness and lamentation, such did the restless beast make me, coming against me and driving me back step by step to where the sun is silent.

When I was rushing down to the place below there appeared before my eyes one whose voice seemed weak from long silence, and when I saw him in the great waste, 'Have pity on me, whoever thou art,' I cried to him 'shade or real man!'

He answered me: 'Not man; once I was man, and my parents were Lombards, both Mantuan by birth. I was born *sub Julio*,[4] though late in his time, and I lived at Rome under the good Augustus, in the time of the false and lying gods. I was a poet and sang of that just son of Anchises[5] who came from Troy after proud Ilium[6] was burned. But thou, why art thou returning to such misery? Why dost thou not climb the delectable mountain which is the beginning and cause of all happiness?'

'Art thou then that Virgil, that fountain which pours forth so rich a stream of speech?' I answered him, my brow covered with shame. 'O glory and light of other poets, let the long study and the great love that has made me search thy volume avail me. Thou art my master and my author. Thou art he from whom alone I took the style whose beauty has brought me honour. See the beast for which I turned; save me from her, famous sage, for she sets the pulses trembling in my veins.'

'Thou must take another road' he replied when he saw me weeping 'if thou wouldst escape from this savage place; for this beast on account of which thou criest lets no man pass her way, but hinders them till she takes their life, and she has a nature so vicious and malignant that her greedy appetite is never satisfied and after food she is hungrier than before. Many are the creatures with which she mates and there will yet be more, until the hound comes that shall bring her to miserable death.[7] He shall not feed on land or pelf but on wisdom and love and valour, and his country shall

be between Feltro and Feltro;[8] he shall be salvation to that low-lying Italy for which the virgin Camilla and Euryalus and Turnus and Nisus died of their wounds;[9] he shall hunt her through every city till he has sent her back to Hell whence envy first let her loose.[10] Therefore, considering what is best for thee, I judge that thou shouldst follow me, and I shall be thy guide and lead thee hence through an eternal place where thou shalt hear the despairing shrieks of the ancient spirits in pain who each bewail the second death.[11] Then thou shalt see those who are contented in the fire[12] because they hope to come, whensoever it may be, to the tribes of the blest, to whom if thou wouldst then ascend there shall be a spirit fitter for that than I; with her I shall leave thee at my parting. For the Emperor who holds sway there above wills not, because I was a rebel to His law, that I come into His city. In every part He reigns and there He rules. There is His city and His lofty seat. O happy the man He chooses to be there!'

And I answered him: 'Poet, I entreat thee by that God whom thou knewest not, in order that I may escape this evil and worse lead me where thou hast said, that I may see Saint Peter's gate[13] and those thou makest so sorrowful.'

Then he set out and I came on behind him.

4. Under Julius Caesar; Virgil was born in 70 B.C.
5. Aeneas.
6. The citadel of Troy.
7. Probably Can Grande della Scala, afterwards Lord of Verona.
8. Probably Verona, between the towns of Feltro and Montefeltro.
9. Four who fell in the Trojan-Latin War.
10. 'Through envy of the devil came death into the world' (*Wisd.* ii. 24).
11. 'The lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death' (*Rev.* xxi. 8).
12. The pains of Purgatory.
13. The gate of penitence admitting to Purgatory proper.

CANTO II

Discouragement; Virgil and Beatrice; the start

THE day was departing and the darkened air releasing the creatures on the earth from their labours, and I, alone, was preparing to endure the conflict both of the way and of the pity of it, which memory that does not err shall recount. O Muses, O lofty genius, aid me now! O memory that noted what I saw, here shall be shown thy worth!

I began: 'Poet, who guidest me, consider my strength, if it is sufficient, before thou commit me to the hard passage. Thou tellest of the father of Sylvius that he went, still subject to corruption, to the eternal world and was there in the flesh.[1] But if the Adversary of all evil showed him this favour, taking account of the high consequence and who and what he was that should spring from him,[2] it does not seem unfitting to one that understands; for in the heaven of the Empyrean[3] he was chosen to be father of glorious Rome and of her Empire, and both of these were established—if we would speak rightly of them—to be the holy place where sits the successor of the great Peter. By this journey for which thou honourest him he heard things which fitted him for his victory and prepared for

the Papal mantle.[4] Later, the Chosen Vessel went there,[5] that he might bring thence confirmation of that faith which is the beginning of the way of salvation.

'But I, why should I go there, and who grants it? I am not Aeneas; I am not Paul. Neither I nor any man thinks me fit for this, so that if I commit myself to go I fear lest my going be folly. Thou art wise; thou understandest better than I speak.'

And as one who unwills what he willed and with new thoughts changes his purpose so that he quite withdraws from what he has begun, such I became on that dark slope; for by thinking of it I brought to naught the enterprise that was so hasty in its beginning.

'If I have rightly understood thy words,' replied the shade of that great soul 'thy spirit is smitten with cowardice, which many a time encumbers a man so that it turns him back from honourable enterprise, as a mistaken sight a shying beast. That I may deliver thee from this fear, I shall tell thee why I came and what I heard at the time when I first took pity on thee. I was among those who are in suspense,[6] and a lady called me, so blessed and so fair that I begged her to command me. Her eyes shone brighter than the stars, and she began to speak to me with angelic voice in sweet, low tones: "O courteous Mantuan soul, whose fame still endures in the world and shall endure as long as the world lasts, my friend, who is no friend of fortune, is so hindered on his way on the desert slope that he has turned back for fear, and from what I have heard of him in Heaven I fear he may already be so far astray that I have risen too late

to succour him. Haste then, and with the beauty of thy speech and whatever is needful for his deliverance give him such help that I shall be comforted. I am Beatrice who bid thee go. I come from the place where I desire to return. Love moved me and makes me speak. When I am before my Lord I will often speak to Him in praise of thee."

'Then she was silent, and I began: "O lady of virtue, through whom alone the human kind surpasses everything within the smallest circle of the heavens,[7] so grateful to me is thy command that my obedience, were it given already, is late; there is no need for more than to declare thy will to me. But tell me the reason why thou dost not shrink from descending into this central depth from the spacious place where thou burnest to return."

' "Since thou wouldst know so deeply," she answered me "I shall tell thee shortly why I do not fear to enter here. Only those things should be feared that have power to do us ill, nothing else, for nothing else is fearful, and I am made such by God of His grace that your misery does not touch me nor a flame of the fires here assail me. There is a gentle lady in Heaven who is so moved with pity of that hindrance for which I send thee that she breaks the stern judgement there on high;[8] she called Lucy[9] and gave her her behest: 'Thy faithful one is now in need of thee and I commend him to thee.' Lucy, enemy of all cruelty, rose and came to the place where I was seated beside the ancient Rachel and said: 'Beatrice, true praise of God, why dost thou not succour him who so loved thee that for thy sake he left the vulgar herd? Hearest thou

not his pitiful weeping? Seest thou not the death which combats him on the flood that is not less terrible than the sea?' Never were men on earth so swift to seek their good or to escape their hurt as I, after these words were spoken, to descend here from my blessed seat, trusting to thy noble speech which honours thyself and them that have heard it."

'When she had talked with me thus she turned away, with tears, her shining eyes; which made me haste the more to come, and so I came to thee as she wished. I delivered thee from that beast which deprived thee of the short way to the beautiful mountain. What then? Why, why dost thou delay? Why harbourest such cowardice in thy heart? Why art thou not bold and free, when three such blessed ladies care for thee in the court of Heaven and my words promise thee so much good?'

As little flowers, bent down and closed with the chill of night, when the sun brightens them stand all open on their stems, such I became with my failing strength, and so much good courage ran into my heart that I began as one set free: 'O she compassionate that succoured me, and thou who of thy courtesy wast quick to obey the true words she spoke to thee! Thou hast so disposed my heart with desire for the journey by thy words that I have returned to my first intent. Now go, for but one will is in us both, thou leader, thou lord and master.'

Thus I spoke to him, and when he set out I entered on the deep and savage way.

CANTO III

The gate of Hell; the Neutrals; the Acheron; Charon

THROUGH ME THE WAY INTO THE WOEFUL CITY,
THROUGH ME THE WAY TO THE ETERNAL PAIN,
THROUGH ME THE WAY AMONG THE LOST PEOPLE.
JUSTICE MOVED MY MAKER ON HIGH,
DIVINE POWER MADE ME AND SUPREME WISDOM AND PRIMAL LOVE;
BEFORE ME NOTHING WAS CREATED BUT ETERNAL THINGS[1] AND I ENDURE ETERNALLY.
ABANDON EVERY HOPE, YE THAT ENTER.

These words I saw inscribed in dark characters over a gateway; therefore I said: 'Master, their sense is dreadful to me.'

And he said to me, like one experienced: 'Here must all distrust be left behind, here must all cowardice be ended; we are come to the place where I told thee thou shouldst see the woeful people who have lost the good of the intellect.'[2] And when he had laid his hand on mine with cheerful looks that gave me comfort, he led me in to the things that are hidden there.

There sighs, lamentations and loud wailings resounded through the starless air, so that at first it made me weep; strange tongues, horrible language, words of pain, tones of anger, voices loud and hoarse, and with these the sound of hands,

made a tumult which is whirling always through that air forever dark, as sand eddies in a whirlwind.

And I, my head encircled with horror, said: 'Master, what is this I hear, and who are these people who seem so mastered by their pain?'

And he said to me: 'This miserable state is borne by the wretched souls of those who lived without disgrace and without praise. They are mixed with that caitiff choir of the angels who were not rebels, nor faithful to God, but were for themselves. The heavens drove them forth, not to be less fair, and the depth of Hell does not receive them lest the wicked have some glory over them.'[3]

And I said: 'Master, what is it that is so grievous to them, making them lament so sorely?'

He replied: 'I will tell thee in few words. They have no hope of death, and so abject is their blind life that they are envious of every other lot. The world suffers no report of them to live. Pity and justice despise them. Let us not talk of them; but look thou and pass.'

And I looked and saw a whirling banner which ran so fast that it seemed as if it could never make a stand, and behind it came so long a train of people that I should never have believed death had undone so many. After I had recognized some of them I saw and knew the shade of him who from cowardice made the great refusal,[4] and at once and with certainty I perceived that this was the worthless crew that is hateful to God and to His enemies. Those wretches, who never were alive,[5] were naked and sorely stung by hornets and wasps that were

there; these made their faces stream with blood, which mingled with their tears and was gathered at their feet by loathsome worms.

And then, directing my sight farther on, I saw people on the bank of a great river, so that I said: 'Master, now grant me to know who they are and what law makes them so eager for the crossing as they seem by what I discern through the dim light.'

And he said to me: 'These things will be plain to thee when we stay our steps on the sad shore of Acheron.'[6]

Then, my eyes bent down with shame, fearing lest my words had displeased him, I kept from speaking till we reached the river. And lo, coming towards us in a boat, an old man, his hair white with age, crying: 'Woe to you, wicked souls, hope not ever to see the sky. I come to bring you to the other bank, into the eternal shades, into fire and frost; and thou there that art a living soul, take thyself apart from these that are dead.'

But when he saw that I did not go, he said: 'By another way, by other ports, not here, thou shalt come to the shore and pass. A lighter vessel must carry thee.'[7]

And my Leader: 'Charon, do not torment thyself. It is so willed where will and power are one, and ask no more.'

On that the shaggy jaws of the pilot of the livid marsh, about whose eyes were wheels of flame, were quiet. But those souls, which were weary and naked, changed colour and gnashed their teeth as soon as they heard his cruel words; they blasphemed God and their parents, the human kind, the place, the time, and the seed of their begetting and of

their birth, then, weeping bitterly, they drew all together to the accursed shore which awaits every man that fears not God. The demon Charon, with eyes of burning coal, beckons to them and gathers them all in, smiting with the oar any that linger. As in autumn the leaves drop off one after the other till the branch sees all its spoils on the ground, so the wicked seed of Adam fling themselves from that shore one by one at the signal, as a falcon at its recall. Thus they depart over the dark water, and before they have landed on the other side a fresh crowd collects again on this.

'My son,' said the courteous Master 'all those that die in the wrath of God assemble here from every land; and they are eager to cross the river, for divine justice so spurs them that fear turns to desire. By this way no good spirit ever passes, and therefore if Charon complains of thee thou canst well understand now what his speech imports.'

When he had ended, the gloomy plain shook so violently that the remembrance of my terror bathes me again with sweat. The tearful ground gave forth wind and a red blaze flashed which overcame all my senses, and I fell like one that is seized with sleep.

5. 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead' (*Rev.* iii. 1).

6. The classical river of death.

7. As a penitent Dante is to go after his death to Purgatory, by a way described in *Purg.* ii.

CANTO IV

The First Circle; the Virtuous Heathen; the four poets; Limbo

A HEAVY thunder-clap broke the deep sleep in my head so that I started like one who is waked by force, and, my eyes being rested, I stood up and looked about me, then set my gaze steadily to know where I was. I found myself in fact on the brink of the abysmal valley of pain, which resounds with noise of countless wailings; it was so dark and deep and full of vapours that, straining my sight to reach the bottom, I could make out nothing there.

'Now let us descend into the blind world down there,' began the Poet, deadly pale; 'I will be first and thou second.'

And I, who noted his colour, said: 'How shall I come if thou art afraid who, when I am in doubt, art wont to be my strength?'

And he said to me: 'The anguish of the people who are down here paints my face with that pity thou takest for fear. Let us go, for the long way urges us.'

So he went on and made me too enter into the first circle that girds the abyss. Here, so far as I could tell by listening, was no lamentation more than sighs which kept the air forever trembling;

these came from grief without torments that was borne by the crowds, which were vast, of men and women and little children.

The good Master said to me: 'Dost thou not ask what spirits are these thou seest? I would have thee know, then, before thou goest farther, that they did not sin; but though they have merits it is not enough, for they had not baptism, which is the gateway of the faith thou holdest; and if they were before Christianity they did not worship God aright, and of these I am one. For such defects, and not for any guilt, we are lost, and only so far afflicted that without hope we live in desire.'

Great grief seized me at the heart when I heard this, for I knew people of much worth who were suspended in that Limbo.

'Tell me, my Master, tell me, sir,' I began, seeking to be assured of that faith which overcomes every doubt,[1] 'did ever anyone, either by his own merit or another's, go out hence and come afterwards to bliss?'

And he, who understood my veiled speech, replied: 'I was new in this condition when I saw a mighty one come here, crowned with a sign of victory.[2] He took from among us the shade of our first parent, of Abel his son, and of Noah, of Moses, law-giver and obedient, of the patriarch Abraham, and of King David, of Israel with his father and his sons and Rachel, for whom he did so much,[3] and many others, and he made them blest. And I would have thee know that before these no human souls were saved.'

We did not cease to go on for his speaking, but continued all the time passing through the forest —for such it seemed—of thronged spirits; and we

had not gone far from where I slept when I saw a blaze of light which was enclosed in a hemisphere of darkness. We were still a short distance from it, yet not so far but that I partly made out that an honourable company occupied that place.

'O thou who honourest both science and art, who are these who have such honour that it sets them apart from the condition of the rest?'

And he said to me: 'Their honourable fame, which resounds in thy life above, gains favour in Heaven which thus advances them.'

At that moment I heard a voice: 'Honour the lofty poet! His shade returns that left us.'

When the voice had paused and there was silence I saw four great shades coming to us; their looks were neither sad nor joyful. The good Master began: 'Mark him there with sword in hand[4] who comes before the three as their lord; he is Homer, the sovereign poet. He that comes next is Horace the moralist, Ovid is the third, and the last Lucan. Since each shares with me in the name the one voice uttered they give me honourable welcome, and in this do well.'

Thus I saw assemble the noble school of that lord of loftiest song who flies like an eagle above the rest. After they had talked together for a time they turned to me with a sign of greeting, and my Master smiled at this; and then they showed me still greater honour, for they made me one of their number so that I was the sixth among those high intelligences. Thus we went on as far as the light, talking of things which were fitting for that place and of which it is well now to be silent.[5]

We came to the foot of a noble castle, encircled seven times with high walls and defended round about by a fair stream; this we passed over as on solid ground and through seven gateways I entered with these sages. We came to a meadow of fresh verdure, where were people with grave and slow-moving eyes and looks of great authority; they spoke seldom, with gentle voices. Then we withdrew on one side to an open space, bright and high, so that we could see every one of them.

There before me on the enamelled green were shown to me the great spirits by the sight of whom I am uplifted in myself. I saw Electra with many in her company, of whom I knew Hector and Aeneas and Caesar, in arms and with his falcon eyes;[5] I saw Camilla and Penthesilea on the other side, and I saw the Latian king, who sat with his daughter Lavinia; I saw that Brutus who drove out Tarquin, Lucrece, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia; and, by himself apart, I saw Balian of Ibelin.

When I raised my eyes a little higher I saw the master of them that know sitting amid a philosophic family, all of them regarding him and all showing him honour.[6] There I saw Socrates and Plato in front of the rest and nearest to him, Democritus, who ascribes the world to chance, Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales, Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Zeno; I saw the skilled collector of simples—I mean Dioscorides—and I saw Orpheus, Cicero, Linus, and Seneca the moralist, Euclid the geometer, and Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Maimonides, Galen, and Abraham Bar Hiyya, him who made the Great Commentary.

I cannot give full account of them all, for the length of my theme so drives me on that many times my words come short of the fact.

The company of six falls off to two and my wise Leader brings me by another way out of the quiet into the trembling air and I come to a part where no light shines.

5. Electra, mother of Dardanus the founder of Troy, accompanied by the chief heroes of Troy and Rome; the names just following are prominent in the same story, Lavinia Aeneas's wife, Lucius Brutus founder of the Roman Republic.

6. Aristotle, with famous Greek and Roman philosophers and scientists; Orpheus and Linus, mythical Greek poets; Avicenna and Averroes, Moslems of the 11th and 12th centuries, and Averroes, author of the *Great Commentary* on Aristotle.

CANTO V

The Second Circle; Minos; the Lustful; Francesca

THUS I descended from the first circle down into the second, which bounds a smaller space and so much more of pain that goads to wailing. There stands Minos,[1] horrible, snarling, examines their offences at the entrance, judges and despatches them according as he girds himself; I mean that when the ill-born soul comes before him it confesses all, and that discerner of sins sees what is the place for it in Hell and encircles himself with his tail as many times as the grades he will have it sent down. Always before him is a crowd of them; they go each in turn to the judgement; they speak and hear and then are hurled below.

'O thou that comest to the abode of pain,' Minos said when he saw me, leaving the business of his great office, 'look how thou enterest and in whom thou trustest; let not the breadth of the entrance deceive thee.'

And my Leader said to him: 'Why dost thou too make an outcry? Hinder not his fated journey. It is so willed where will and power are one; and ask no more.'

Now the notes of pain begin to reach my ears; now I am come where great wailing breaks on me.

I came to a place where all light was mute and where was bellowing as of a sea in tempest that is beaten by conflicting winds. The hellish storm, never resting, seizes and drives the spirits before it; smiting and whirling them about, it torments them. When they come before its fury there are shrieks, weeping and lamentation, and there they blaspheme the power of God; and I learned that to such torment are condemned the carnal sinners who subject reason to desire. As in the cold season their wings bear the starlings along in a broad, dense flock, so does that blast the wicked spirits. Hither, thither, downward, upward, it drives them; no hope ever comforts them, not to say of rest, but of less pain. And as the cranes go chanting their lays, making of themselves a long line in the air, so I saw approach with long-drawn wailings shades borne on these battling winds, so that I said: 'Master, who are these people whom the black air so scourges?'

'The first among those of whom thou wouldst know' he said to me then 'was Empress of peoples of many tongues, who was so corrupted by licentious vice that she made lust lawful in her law to take away the scandal into which she was brought; she is Semiramis, of whom we read that she succeeded Ninus, being his wife, and held the land which the Soldan rules.[2] The next is she that slew herself for love and broke faith with the ashes of Sychaeus, and then wanton Cleopatra; see Helen, for whose sake so many years of ill revolved; and see the great Achilles, who fought at the last with

love; see Paris, Tristan,—' and he showed me more than a thousand shades, naming them as he pointed, whom love parted from our life. When I heard my Teacher name the knights and ladies of old times, pity came upon me and I was as one bewildered.

I began: 'Poet, I would fain speak with these two that go together and seem so light upon the wind.'[3]

And he said to me: 'Thou shalt see when they are nearer us, and do thou entreat them then by the love that leads them, and they will come.'

As soon as the wind bent their course to us I raïsed my voice: 'O wearied souls, come and speak with us, if One forbids it not.'

As doves, summoned by desire, come with wings poised and motionless to the sweet nest, borne by their will through the air, so these left the troop where Dido is, coming to us through the malignant air; such force had my loving call.

'O living creature gracious and friendly, who goest through the murky air visiting us who stained the world with blood, if the King of the universe were our friend we would pray to Him for thy peace, since thou hast pity of our evil plight. Of that which thou art pleased to hear and speak we will hear and speak with you while the wind is quiet, as here it is. The city where I was born[4] lies on the shore where the Po, with the streams that join it, descends to rest. Love, which is quickly kindled in the gentle heart, seized this man for the fair form that was taken from me, and the manner afflicts me still. Love, which absolves no one beloved from loving, seized me so strongly with his charm that, as thou seest, it does not leave me yet. Love

brought us to one death. Caina waits for him who quenched our life.'[5] These words were borne from them to us. And when I heard these afflicted souls I bent my head and held it down so long that at last the Poet said to me: 'What are thy thoughts?'

When I answered I began: 'Alas, how many sweet thoughts, how great desire, brought them to the woeful pass!' Then I turned to them again to speak and began: 'Francesca, thy torments make me weep for grief and pity, but tell me, in the time of your sweet sighing how and by what occasion did love grant you to know your uncertain desires?'

And she answered me: 'There is no greater pain than to recall the happy time in misery, and this thy teacher knows; but if thou hast so great desire to know our love's first root, I shall tell as one may that weeps in telling. We read one day for pastime of Lancelot,[6] how love constrained him. We were alone and had no misgiving. Many times that reading drew our eyes together and changed the colour in our faces, but one point alone it was that mastered us; when we read that the longed-for smile was kissed by so great a lover, he who never shall be parted from me, all trembling, kissed my mouth. A Galeotto was the book and he that wrote it;[7] that day we read in it no farther.'

While the one spirit said this the other wept so that for pity I swooned as if in death and dropped like a dead body.

CANTO VI

The Third Circle; the Gluttonous; Cerberus; Ciacco

WITH the return of my mind that was shut off before the piteous state of the two kinsfolk, which quite confounded me with grief, new torments and new souls in torment I see about me, wherever I move and turn and set my gaze. I am in the third circle, of eternal, accursed rain, cold and heavy, never changing its measure or its kind; huge hail, foul water and snow pour down through the gloomy air, and the ground that receives it stinks. Cerberus,[1] a beast fierce and hideous, with three throats barks like a dog over the people that are immersed there; he has red eyes, a beard greasy and black, a great belly, and clawed hands, and he scars and flays and rends the spirits. The rain makes them howl like dogs, and the profane wretches often turn themselves, of one side making a shelter for the other.

When Cerberus, the great worm, perceived us, he opened his mouths and showed us the fangs, not one of his limbs keeping still, and my Leader spread his hands, took up earth, and with full fists threw it into the ravenous gullets. As the dog that

yelps for greed and becomes quiet when it bites its food, being all absorbed in struggling to devour it, such became these foul visages of the demon Cerberus, who so thunders at the souls that they would fain be deaf.

We passed over the shades that were beaten down by the heavy rain, setting our feet on their emptiness, which seemed real bodies. They were all lying on the ground, except one who sat up as soon as he saw us passing before him.

'O thou who art led through this Hell,' he said to me 'recall me, if thou canst; thou wast begun before I was ended.'

And I said to him: 'The anguish thou hast perhaps takes thee from my memory, so that I do not seem ever to have seen thee; but tell me who thou art, put in a place of such misery and under such a penalty that, if any is greater, none is so loathsome.'

And he said to me: 'Thy city, which is so full of envy that already the sack runs over, held me within it in the bright life, when you citizens called me Ciacco.[2] For the damning fault of gluttony, as thou seest, I lie helpless in the rain; and in my misery I am not alone, for all these are under the same penalty for the same fault.' And he said no more.

I answered him: 'Ciacco, thy distress so weighs on me that it bids me weep. But tell me, if thou canst, what the citizens of the divided city shall come to and whether any there is just, and tell me the cause of such discord assailing it.'

And he said to me: 'After long strife they shall come to blood and the party of the rustics[3] shall drive out the other with much offence; then, by

force of one who is now manœuvring, that party is destined to fall within three years and the other to prevail, long holding its head high and keeping the first under grievous burdens, for all their tears and shame. Two men are just and are not heeded there. Pride, envy and avarice are the three sparks that have set these hearts on fire.' Here he made an end of his grievous words.

And I said to him: 'I would still learn from thee, and I beg thee to grant me further speech. Farinata and Tegghiaio, men of such worth, Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo and Mosca and the rest whose minds were set on well-doing,[4] tell me where they are and give me knowledge of them; for I am pressed with a great desire to know whether they share Heaven's sweetness or the bitterness of Hell.'

And he: 'They are among the blackest souls and different faults weigh them down to the depth; if thou descend so far thou canst see them. But when thou shalt be in the sweet world I pray thee bring me to men's memory. I tell thee no more nor answer thee again.'

With that he turned his direct look askance, gazed at me for a moment, then bent his head and so dropped to the level of the other blind.

And my Leader said to me: 'He wakes no more till the sounding of the angel's trumpet, when the adverse Judge[5] shall come; each shall find again the sad tomb and take again his flesh and form and hear that which echoes in eternity.'

So we passed on through the foul mixture of the shades and the rain with slow steps, touching a little on the life to come. I said therefore: 'Master, will these torments increase after the great judgement, or become less, or continue as fierce as now?'

And he answered me: 'Go back to thy science,[6] which requires that in the measure of a creature's perfection it feels more both of pleasure and of pain. Although these people who are accursed never come to true perfection, they look to be completer then than now.'

We went round that curving road, with much more talk than I repeat, and reached the point where the descent begins. Here we found Plutus, the great enemy.[7]

4. Recent Florentines of note. Arrigo is not mentioned again; the other four appear in Cantos x, xvi, and xxviii.

5. Christ.

6. The teaching of Aristotle, repeated by Aquinas.

7. Plutus, classical god of wealth, perhaps confused here with Pluto, king of the infernal regions.

CANTO VII

The Fourth Circle; the Avaricious and the Prodigal; Plutus; Fortune; the Fifth Circle; the Wrathful

'PAPE Satan, Pape Satan, aleppe!'[1] began Plutus with clucking voice; and the gentle Sage, who knew all, said for my comfort: 'Do not let thy fear distress thee, for with all his power he shall not hinder us from descending this rock.' Then he turned back on that bloated visage and said: 'Silence, accursed wolf! Consume thyself with thy rage within. Not without cause is his journey to the depth; it is willed on high, where Michael avenged the proud adultery.'[2]

As sails swollen with the wind fall in a heap when the mast snaps, so fell the cruel beast to the ground.

Then we descended into the fourth hollow, passing farther down the dismal slope which ensacks all the evil of the universe. Ah, Justice of God, who crams together all the new toils and pains that I saw? And why does our sin so lay us waste? As do the waves there above Charybdis,[3] one breaking against another when they meet, so must the souls here dance their round. Here I saw far more people than elsewhere both on the one side and the other, with great howls rolling weights by main force of chest; they clashed together when

they met and then at that point each turned about and rolled his weight back again, shouting: 'Why hoard?' and 'Why squander?' Thus they returned round the gloomy circle on either hand to the opposite point, shouting at each other again their taunting chorus; then, having reached it, each turned back by his half circle to the other joust.

And I, whose heart was as if pierced through, said: 'My Master, show me now who are these people and whether all these tonsured ones on our left were clerics.'

And he said to me: 'Every one of them was so asquint in mind in the first life that they had no right measure in their spending; this they bark out plainly enough when they reach the two points of the circle, where contrary faults divide them. These were clerics whose hair does not cover their heads, both popes and cardinals, in whom avarice shows its mastery.'

And I said: 'Master, among such as these I ought surely to recognize some who were defiled with these offences.'

And he answered me: 'Thou harbourest a vain thought; the undiscerning life that made them foul now makes them obscure to all discernment. They shall come forever to the two buttings; these shall rise from the grave with closed fist, and these with cropped hair;[4] ill-giving and ill-keeping have robbed them of the fair world and set them in this scuffle, —such as it is, I spend no fair words on it. Now mayst thou see, my son, the brief mockery of the wealth committed to fortune, for which the race of men embroil themselves; for all the gold that is beneath the moon, or ever was, could not give rest to one of these weary souls.'

'Master,' I said to him 'now tell me further, this fortune thou namest to me, who is she that holds the world's wealth thus in her clutches?'

And he said to me: 'O foolish creatures, what ignorance is this that besets you! Now I will have thee feed on my judgement of her. He whose wisdom transcends all made the heavens and gave them guides, so that every part shines to every part, dispersing the light equally.[5] In the same way He ordained for worldly splendours a general minister and guide who should in due time change vain wealth from race to race and from one to another blood, beyond the prevention of human wits, so that one race rules and another languishes according to her sentence which is hidden like the snake in the grass. Your wisdom cannot strive with her. She foresees, judges and maintains her kingdom, as the other heavenly powers do theirs. Her changes have no respite. Necessity makes her swift, so fast men come to take their turn. This is she who is so reviled by the very men that should give her praise, laying on her wrongful blame and ill repute. But she is blest and does not hear it. Happy with the other primal creatures she turns her sphere and rejoices in her bliss.

'Now let us descend to greater wretchedness. Already every star sinks that was rising when I set out[6] and it is forbidden to stay too long.'

We crossed the circle to the other edge, past a spring that boils up and pours over by a trench leading from it, the water of the blackest purple, and following its murky waves we entered the place below by a rough track. This gloomy stream, when

it has reached the foot of the malign grey slopes, enters the marsh which is called Styx;[7] and I, who had stopped to gaze intently, saw muddy people in that bog, all naked and with looks of rage. They were smiting each other not only with the hand but with head and breast and feet and tearing each other piecemeal with their teeth.

The good Master said: 'Son, thou seest now the souls of those whom anger overcame; and I would have thee know for sure also that there are people under the water who sigh and make the water bubble on the surface, as thine eye tells thee wherever it turns. Fixed in the slime they say: "We were sullen in the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun, bearing in our hearts a sluggish smoke; now we are sullen in the black mire." This hymn they gurgle in their throat, for they cannot get the words out plainly.'

Thus we went round a great arc of the filthy pond between the dry bank and the swamp, our eyes bent on those that gorged themselves with the mire; and we came at last to the foot of a tower.

4. A proverbial expression in Italian is that a prodigal spends 'even to the hair of his head'.

5. The reference is to the angelic orders controlling the heavens (*Par.* xxviii).

6. It is now after midnight of Good Friday.

7. One of the rivers of the classical under-world.

CANTO VIII

Phlegyas; the Styx; Filippo Argenti; the gate of Dis

CONTINUING, I have to tell that long before we were at the foot of the high tower our eyes rose to its top on account of two lights which we saw put there and to which another, so far off that we could hardly make it out, sent back a signal. And I turned to the sea of all wisdom and said: 'What does this mean? And that other fire, what does it answer? And who are they that have made it?'

And he said to me: 'Over the foul waves thou mayst discern already that which we wait for, if the marsh's fumes do not hide it from thee.'

Never string drove arrow from the bow that ran so swiftly through the air as at that moment I saw approaching us a little boat in charge of a single oarsman, who cried: 'Now thou art caught, guilty soul!'

'Phlegyas, Phlegyas,[1] this time thou criest in vain,' said my Lord 'thou shalt have us no longer than the passing of the slough.'

Like one that hears of a great fraud practised on him and then resents it, such Phlegyas became in his pent-up rage.

My Leader went down into the boat, then made me enter after him, and not until I was in did it

seem laden, and as soon as he and I had embarked the ancient prow moved off, cutting deeper into the water than it was wont with others.

While we were running through the stagnant channel there rose up in front of me one covered with mud and said: 'Who art thou that comest before thy time?'

And I said to him: 'If I come I do not stay. But thou, who art thou that art become so foul?'

He answered: 'Thou seest I am one that weeps.'

And I to him: 'In weeping and in misery, accursed spirit, remain; for I know thee, for all thy filth.'

Then he reached out to the boat with both hands; on which the wary Master thrust him off, saying: 'Away there with the other dogs!', then clasped me with his arms about my neck, kissed my cheek and said: 'Indignant soul, blessed is the womb that bore thee! In the world this man was full of arrogance; no good there is to adorn his memory, therefore is his shade here furious. How many above there now account themselves great kings who shall lie here like swine in the mire, leaving of themselves horrible dispraises!'

And I said: 'Master, I should like well to see him soused in this broth before we leave the lake.'

And he to me: 'Before the shore comes in sight thou shalt have satisfaction; in such a wish thou art sure to be gratified.'

Soon after I saw such a rending of him by the muddy crowd that I still give praise and thanks to God for it; all cried: 'At Filippo Argenti!'[2] and the passionate Florentine spirit turned on himself with his teeth. Here we left him, so of him I have no more to tell; but on my ears smote a sound of grief, at which with eyes wide open I looked intently forward.

The good Master said: 'Now, my son, the city draws near which bears the name of Dis,[3] with its grave citizens and great garrison.'

And I said: 'Master, already I make out distinctly its mosques there within the valley, red as if they had come out of the fire.'

And he said to me: 'The eternal fire which burns within them makes them show red, as thou seest, in this nether Hell.'

We got right into the deep moats entrenching that unhappy city, whose walls seemed to be of iron, and when we had first made a wide circuit we came to a place where the boatman cried loudly: 'Go out here, that is the entrance.'

I saw above the gates more than a thousand of those rained down from Heaven,[4] who cried angrily: 'Who is this that without death goes through the kingdom of the dead?' And the Sage my Master made a sign that he would speak with them apart. Then they restrained a little their fierce resentment and said: 'Come thou alone, and let him go off who has dared thus to enter on this kingdom. Let him return alone on his mad way and see if he knows it, for thou shalt stay here who hast been his guide on that dark road.'

Judge, reader, if I did not lose heart at the sound of the accursed words; for I did not think I should ever return here.

'O my dear Leader, who seven times and more hast restored my confidence and drawn me from great peril confronting me, leave me not' I said 'so undone; and if going farther is denied us, let us quickly retrace our steps together.'

And my Liege who had brought me there said to me: 'Do not fear, for none can hinder our passage, by such an One is it granted us; but wait

for me here and comfort thy weary spirit and feed it with good hope, for I will not forsake thee in the nether world.'

He goes away and leaves me there, the gentle Father, and I remain in doubt, ay and no contending in my head. I could not hear what he put before them; but he was not long there with them when they all ran in headlong, and these our adversaries shut the gates in the face of my Lord, who was left outside and turned back to me with slow steps. His eyes were on the ground and his brow shorn of all boldness and he said between his sighs: 'Who are these to deny me the abodes of pain?' And to me he said: 'Do not thou be dismayed for my vexation, for I shall prevail in the contest, whatever is contrived within to hinder us. This insolence of theirs is not new, for once they showed it at a less hidden gate, which still stands without a bolt. Over it thou sawest the deadly writing,[5] and already within it one descends the steep and passes without escort through the circles, by whom the city shall be opened to us.'

4. The rebel angels.

5. In the legend of the Harrowing of Hell the devils opposed Christ's entry; a passage in the service for Easter Eve runs: 'Today our Saviour burst the bolts and gates of death.'

CANTO IX

The Furies; the Angel; the Sixth Circle; the Heretics

THAT colour which cowardice brought out in me, seeing my Leader turn back, the more quickly repressed the change in his. He stopped attentive as if listening, for the eye could not reach far through the dark air and dense fog. 'Yet we must win this fight,' he began 'or else . . .! Such help was offered us![1] How long it seems till someone comes!'

I saw plainly, as soon as he covered up his beginning with the words that followed, that they were different from the first; but none the less what he said made me afraid, for I drew out his broken phrases to a worse meaning than perhaps he meant.

'Does anyone ever descend to this depth of the dismal hollow from the first circle, where the only penalty is hope cut off?' I asked; and he answered: 'It seldom happens that any of us makes the journey on which I go, but I was down here once before, conjured by that fell Erichtho who recalled shades to their bodies.[2] My flesh was not long naked of me when she made me enter within that wall to draw forth a spirit from the circle of Judas, the deepest and darkest place, farthest from the heaven that encircles all.[3] Well do I know the way, therefore be reassured. This marsh

exhaling the great stench goes all round the woeful city, which we cannot now enter without contention.'

And he said more, but I do not remember it, for my sight had drawn me wholly to the lofty tower with the glowing summit, where all at once were risen erect three hellish, blood-stained Furies that had the parts and the bearing of women and were girt with hydras of bright green, and for hair they had little serpents and horned snakes twined about the savage temples. And he, who knew well the handmaids of the Queen of everlasting lamentations,[4] said to me: 'See the fierce Erinyes![5] That is Megæra on the left; she wailing on the right is Alecto; Tesiphone is in the middle'; and with that he was silent. Each was rending her breast with her nails; they smote themselves with their palms and cried so loud that I pressed close to the Poet for fear.

'Let Medusa come and we will turn him to stone,'[6] they all cried, looking down; 'we avenged ill the assault of Theseus.'[7]

'Turn thy back and keep thine eyes shut, for should the Gorgon show herself and thou see her there would be no returning above.' My Master said this and himself turned me round and, not trusting to my hands, covered my face with his own also.

Ye that are of good understanding, note the teaching that is hidden under the veil of the strange lines.

And now came over the turbid waves a crashing, fearful sound that set both shores trembling; it was like the noise of a wind violent from conflicting heats which strikes the forest and with unchecked

course splits the branches, flings them down and carries them away and, driving the dust before it, goes on in pride and puts wild beasts and shepherds to flight.

He freed my eyes and said: 'Strain now thy sight over that ancient scum to the part where the fume is harshest.'

As frogs before their enemy the snake all vanish through the water till each squats on the bottom, so I saw more than a thousand ruined souls flee before one that passed on foot over the Styx dry-shod; he was clearing that gross air from his face, moving often his left hand in front of him, and only of that vexation he seemed weary. Well I perceived that he was one sent from Heaven, and I turned to the Master, who signed to me to keep silence and bow down to him. Ah, how full of indignation he appeared to me! He came to the gate and with a little wand opened it, for there was no resistance.

'O outcasts of Heaven, despised race,' he began on the horrid threshold 'whence this insolence that harbours in you? Why kick against that will whose end can never be frustrate and which has many a time increased your pain? What profits it to butt against the fates? Your own Cerberus—if you rightly remember—still bears his chin and throat peeled for this.'[8] Then he turned back on the filthy way; and he said not a word to us, but had the look of one pressed and spurred by another care than that of those before him. And we moved our steps towards the city, secure after the holy words.

We entered in there without dispute; and I, who was eager to examine the condition of those held within such a stronghold, cast my eye round as

soon as I was inside, and I saw on every hand a great plain full of pain and cruel torment. Just as at Arles where the Rhone makes a swamp, and at Pola near Quarnero, which bounds Italy and bathes its confines,[9] the graves make the whole place uneven, so they did here on every side, except for their more grievous nature here. For among the tombs were spread flames by which they were made to glow all over hotter than is wanted by any craft. All their lids stood open and such dire lamentations issued from them as plainly came from people wretched and suffering.

And I said: 'Master, who are these people buried within these chests whose groans of pain we hear?'

And he said to me: 'Here are the arch-heretics with their followers of every sect, and the tombs are laden far more than thou thinkest; like is buried with like and the monuments are heated more and less.'

Then, turning to the right, we passed between the torments and the lofty ramparts.

6. Medusa, one of the Gorgon sisters of Greek mythology; the sight of her turned men to stone.

7. Theseus, King of Athens, tried to rescue Proserpine from Hell and was himself rescued by Hercules.

8. Hercules dragged Cerberus from Hell with a chain.

9. At Arles in Provence and at Pola in Istria were ancient burial-places.

CANTO X

Farinata; Cavalcante

My Master now made his way by a hidden track between the wall of the city and the torments, and I close behind him.

'O thou of loftiest virtue,' I began 'who leadest me round as thou wilt through the sinful circles, speak to me and satisfy my desires. The people that lie within the sepulchres, may they be seen, for indeed all the covers are raised and no one keeps guard?'

And he answered me: 'All will be shut in when they return from Jehoshaphat with the bodies they have left above.[1] In this part Epicurus and all his followers, who make the soul die with the body, have their burial-place;[2] but, for thy question to me, thou shalt soon have satisfaction from within there, and for the desire too about which thou art silent.'

And I said: 'Good Leader, I do not keep my heart hidden from thee except to speak less, and to that thou hast before now disposed me.'

'O Tuscan who makest thy way alive through the city of fire and speakest so modestly, may it please thee to stop at this point: thy tongue shows thee native of that noble fatherland to which I was perhaps too harsh.' Suddenly this sound issued from one of the chests, so that in fear I drew a little closer to my Leader.

And he said to me: 'Turn round. What ails thee? See there Farinata who has risen erect; from the middle up thou shalt see his full height.'[3]

Already I had my eyes fixed on his and he was lifting up his breast and brow as if he had great scorn of Hell, and the bold and ready hands of my Leader pushed me between the tombs to him, saying: 'Let thy words be fitting.'

When I was at the foot of his tomb he looked at me for a moment, and then, as if in disdain, asked me: 'Who were thy ancestors?' And I, who was eager to obey, concealed nothing and made all plain to him; at which he raised his eyebrows a little, then said: 'They were fierce enemies to me and to my forebears and to my party, so that twice over I scattered them.'

'If they were driven out' I answered him 'they returned from every quarter both the first time and the second; but yours did not rightly learn that art.'

Then rose to sight beside him a shade showing as far as the chin; I think he had lifted himself on his knees. He looked round about me as if he had a desire to see whether someone was with me, but when his expectation was all quenched he said, weeping: 'If thou goest through this blind prison by height of genius, where is my son and why is he not with thee?'

And I answered him: 'I come not of myself; he that waits yonder is leading me through here, perhaps to her your Guido held in disdain.' His words and the nature of his punishment had already told me his name, so that I replied thus fully.[4]

Suddenly erect, he cried: 'How saidst thou "he held"? Lives he not still? Strikes not the sweet

light on his eyes?' When he perceived that I made some delay before replying he fell back again and was seen no more.

But that other, the great soul at whose desire I had stopped, did not change countenance, nor move his head, nor bend his form. And continuing the former talk: 'If they have badly learned that art,' he said 'it is worse torment to me than this bed; but not fifty times shall the face of the lady who reigns here be rekindled before thou shalt know for thyself how hard is that art.[5] And, so mayst thou return some time to the sweet world, tell me why that people is so pitiless against my kindred in all its laws.'

To which I answered him: 'The rout and the great slaughter that stained the Arbia red are the cause of such devotions in our temple.'[6]

He sighed and shook his head, then said: 'In that I was not alone, nor without cause, assuredly, would I have moved with the rest; but there I was alone where all agreed to make an end of Florence, the one man to defend her before them all.'[7]

'So may your seed some time have rest, pray loose for me this knot,' I begged of him 'which has here entangled my judgement. It seems, if I hear aright, that you see beforehand what time brings with it, but that in regard to the present it is not so with you.'

'We see, like those with faulty vision, things at a distance from us,' he said 'so much light the Sovereign Lord still grants us; when they draw near or are present our intellect is wholly at fault and unless others bring us word we know nothing of your human state. Thou canst understand, therefore, that all our knowledge will be dead from the moment the door of the future is closed.'[8]

Then, being moved with compunction for my fault, I said: 'Will you, now, tell him who fell back that his son is still in the company of the living` And let him know that, if I was silent in response to him before, it is because I was already occupied with the doubt you have cleared for me.'

And now my Master was recalling me; with more haste, therefore, I begged the spirit to tell me who were there with him, and he said to me: 'I lie here with more than a thousand. Within here is the second Frederick[9] and the Cardinal,[10] and of the rest I say nothing.'

With that he hid himself, and I turned my steps to the ancient Poet, thinking over that saying which seemed hostile to me. He set out, and then, as we went, he said to me: 'Why art thou so lost in thought?' And I satisfied his question.

'Keep in thy memory what thou hast heard against thyself,' the Sage bade me 'but now give heed to what is here'; and he pointed with his finger. 'When thou art before her sweet radiance whose fair eyes see all, thou shalt know from her of thy life's journey.'

Then he turned his feet to the left and leaving the wall we went towards the centre by a path that strikes down to a valley from which the stench even up there was offensive.

5. The moon is identified with Proserpine, Queen of Hell. Fifty months after this (1304) a great attempt at the reconciliation and return of the Florentine exiles, Dante among them, was unsuccessful.

6. The repeated decree for the exclusion of the Uberti from Florence was passed probably in the Church of St John, the present Baptistery; such were the 'devotions' of Florence.

7. After Montaperti the Ghibellines proposed to destroy Florence.

8. When time ends with the Judgement Day.

9. Emperor (1212–1250), charged with sensualism and materialism.

10. Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, of a great Ghibelline family, is reported to have said: 'If there is a soul, I have lost mine a thousand times for the Ghibellines.'

CANTO XI

The Plan of Hell

On the edge of a great steep made by a circle of huge broken rocks we came above a more cruel pen, and here, for the horrible excess of stench thrown up by the profound abyss, we drew back behind the cover of a great vault on which I saw an inscription that said: 'I hold Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus drew from the straight path.'[1]

'We must delay our descent, that the sense may first get used a little to the vile breath, and then we shall not heed it.' Thus the Master; and I: 'Find some compensation, that the time may not be lost'; and he: 'Thou shalt see it is my own thought.'

'My son,' he began then 'within these cliffs are three lesser circles, one below another, like those thou art leaving; all are full of spirits accursed, but, that afterwards the sight itself may suffice thee, understand how and why they are confined there. Every kind of wickedness that gains the hatred of Heaven has injustice for its end, and every such end afflicts someone either by force or fraud;[2] but because fraud is a sin peculiar to man it is more offensive to God, and for that reason the fraudulent have their place lower and more pain assails them. All the first circle is of the violent; but since violence is done to three persons, it is formed of three

separate rounds. Force may be used against God, against oneself, against a neighbour—in themselves, that is, or in things that are theirs, as I shall make plain to thee. Violent death and painful wounds are inflicted on a neighbour, and on his substance devastations, burnings, and wrongful exactions; therefore homicides and everyone that wounds in malice, pillagers and plunderers, the first round torments them all in different troops. A man may lay violent hands on himself or on his own possessions, and therefore in the second round must repent in vain whoever robs himself of your world or gambles away and dissipates his wealth, lamenting where he should rejoice. Violence may be done to the Godhead by denying and blaspheming Him in the heart and by despising nature and her bounty, and therefore the smallest round stamps with its seal both Sodom[3] and Cahors[4] and him that speaks despitefully in his heart against God.[5] Fraud, which always stings the conscience, a man may practise on one who confides in him or on one who does not so place his confidence; it is evident that this latter way destroys simply the bond of love which nature makes, so that in the next circle hypocrisy, flatteries, sorceries, falsifications, theft, and simony, panders, jobbers, and like filth have their nest. By the other way both that love which nature makes is forgotten and that also which is added to it and which creates a special trust; therefore in the smallest circle, at the central point of the universe and seat of Dis, every traitor is consumed eternally.'

And I said: 'Master, thy account is quite clear thus far and makes very plain the distinctions in this abyss and among the people it holds; but tell

me, those of the slimy bog, those the wind drives, those the rain beats on, and those that encounter with such bitter tongues, why are they not punished within the red city if God holds them in His wrath? And if He does not why are they in such a plight?'

And he said to me: 'Why do thy thoughts wander so from their wont, or where else is thy mind looking? Rememberest thou not the words with which thy *Ethics*[6] expounds the three dispositions which are against the will of Heaven, incontinence, malice, and mad brutishness, and how incontinence offends God less and incurs less blame? If thou consider well this teaching and call to mind who are those that bear their penalty above outside thou shalt see clearly why they are separated from these wicked spirits and why divine vengeance smites them with less wrath.'

'O Sun that healest all troubled sight, so dost thou satisfy me with the resolving of my doubts that it is no less grateful to me to question than to know. Turn back again a little' I said 'to the point where thou saidst that usury offends against the Divine Goodness, and loose that knot.'

'Philosophy, for one who understands,' he said to me 'notes, not in one place only, how nature takes her course from the divine mind and its art;[7] and if thou note well thy *Physics* thou wilt find, not many pages on, that your art, as far as it can, follows nature as the pupil the master, so that your art is to God, as it were, a grandchild. By these two, if thou recall to mind *Genesis* near the beginning,[8] it behoves mankind to gain their livelihood and their advancement, and because the usurer

takes another way he despises nature both in herself and in her follower, setting his hope elsewhere.

But now follow me, for I would go; the Fishes are quivering on the horizon and all the Wain lies over Caurus[9] and farther on there is the descent of the cliff.'

5. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God' (*Ps.* xiv. 1).

6. *Ethics*, Philosophy and *Physics* below mean Aristotle's.

7. 'Art' in the sense of operation or workmanship; nature is God's 'art'.

8. Man's material resources are nature and industry. 'God blessed them and said, . . . Replenish the earth and subdue it. . . . And God said, Behold I have given you every herb, . . . to you it shall be for meat' (*Gen.* i. 28–29).

9. The Constellation of the Fishes rises in that season shortly before the sun; Caurus is the N.W. wind; it is now early morning of Holy Saturday.

CANTO XII

The Seventh Circle; the Violent; the Minotaur; the First Round; the Violent against others; the Centaurs; the Phlegethon

THE place where we came for the descent of the steep was alpine, and besides, because of what was there, a place every eye would shun. Like the landslip that struck the flank of the Adige on this side Trent on account of earthquake or lack of support, where from the mountain-top from which it started to the plain the rocks are so shattered that they would give some footing for one above, such was the descent of that ravine; and on the edge of the broken chasm was outstretched the infamy of Crete that was conceived in the pretended cow.[1] And when he saw us he gnawed himself, like one that bursts with inward rage.

My Sage cried to him: 'Thou thinkest, perhaps, that the Duke of Athens is here, who in the world above gave thee thy death. Get thee gone, beast, for this man does not come tutored by thy sister, but is on his way to see your pains.'

Like the bull that breaks loose the moment it has received its mortal stroke and cannot go on but plunges this way and that, so I saw the Minotaur do, and my Guide, perceiving it, cried: 'Run to the passage; it is well thou descend while he is in fury.'

So we took our way down that scree of stones, which often moved under my feet with the new weight.

I was going on in thought when he said: 'Thou are thinking, perhaps, of this ruined cliff that is guarded by that bestial rage I quenched just now; know then that the other time I came down here into the nether Hell this rock had not yet fallen. But surely, if I reckon rightly, it was a little before he came who carried off from Dis the great spoil of the highest circle that the deep, foul valley trembled on every side[2] so that I thought the universe felt love, by which, as some believe, the world has many times been turned to chaos;[3] and at that moment this ancient rock, here and elsewhere, was thrown down thus. But fix thine eyes below, for the river of blood draws near in which are boiling those that by violence do injury to others.'

O blind covetousness and foolish anger, which in the brief life so goad us on and then, in the eternal, steep us in such misery! I saw a broad moat bent in a curve so as to encircle the whole level, just as my Escort had said, and between it and the foot of the scarp ran centaurs in line armed with arrows, as they were accustomed on earth to follow the chase. Seeing us coming down they all stopped and three left the troop with bows and shafts which they first selected, and one cried from a distance: 'To what torment do you come, you that descend the slope? Tell us from there; if not, I draw my bow.'

My Master said: 'We will give our answer to Chiron beside thee there. Thy will was ever thus hasty, to thy hurt.' Then he touched me and said:

'That is Nessus, who died for the fair Dejanira and himself avenged himself;' and he in the middle that looks down on his breast is the great Chiron, who brought up Achilles; and that other is Pholus, who was so full of anger. Round the moat they go by thousands, directing their arrows at any soul that draws itself out of the blood farther than its guilt allots to it.'

We drew near to these agile beasts and Chiron took a dart and with the notch put his beard back on his jaws, and when he had uncovered his great mouth he said to his companions: 'Have you observed that the one behind moves what he touches? The feet of the dead are not wont to do so.'

And my good Leader, who was now at his breast where the two natures are joined, replied: 'He is indeed alive and, alone as he is, I must show him the gloomy valley. Necessity brings him here, not pleasure. It was one that left her singing of hallelujahs who laid on me this new task. He is no robber, nor I a thievish spirit; but, by that Power by which I move my steps on so wild a track, give us one of thy band whom we may keep beside, that he may show us where the ford is and carry this man over on his back, for he is not a spirit to go through the air.'

Chiron bent round on his right breast and said to Nessus: 'Go back and guide them then, and if you meet another troop make it keep off.'

We moved on then with the trusty guide along the margin of the red boiling, in which the boiled made piercing shrieks. I saw people sunk to the eyebrows, and the great Centaur said: 'They are tyrants who gave their hands to blood and plunder;

here they lament their ruthless crimes. Here is Alexander and cruel Dionysius, he that gave woeful years to Sicily;[6] and that brow with the hair so black is Ezzelino, and that other that is fair Obizzo of Este, who was indeed made an end of by his step-son in the world above.'[6]

Then I turned to the Poet, and he said: 'Let him be first with thee now and me second.'

A little farther on the Centaur stopped above a crowd who appeared as far as the throat issuing from that boiling stream, and he pointed out to us a shade on one side alone and said: 'That one clove in God's bosom the heart which still drips on the Thames.'[7]

Then I saw people who had the head and also the whole chest out of the river, and of these I recognized many. So, more and more, the blood there became shallow till it cooked only the feet; and here was our passage of the moat.

'As on this side thou seest the boiling stream diminish continually,' said the Centaur 'so I would have thee know that on the other, more and more, it deepens its bed till it comes again to the place where tyranny must groan. There Divine Justice stings that Attila who was a scourge on earth,[8] and Pyrrhus, and Sextus,[9] and eternally milks the tears, unlocked by the boiling, from Rinier of Corneto and Rinier Pazzo, who on the highways made such strife.'[10]

Then he turned back and crossed the ford again.

CANTO XIII

The Second Round; the Violent against themselves; the Suicides; the barren wood; Piero delle Vigne

NESSUS had not yet reached the other side again when we set out through a wood which was not marked by any path. No green leaves, but of dusky hue; no smooth boughs, but knotted and warped; no fruits were there, but poisonous thorns. No brakes so harsh and dense have these savage beasts that hate the tilled lands between the Cecina and Corneto.[1] Here make their nests the loathsome Harpies that drove the Trojans from the Strophades with dismal presage of future ill;[2] they have wide wings and human necks and faces, feet clawed and their great bellies feathered, and they make lamentations on the strange trees.

And the good Master began to speak to me: 'Before thou go farther know that thou art in the second round and shalt be until thou come to the horrible sand; look well, therefore, and thou shalt see things which would discredit my telling of them.'

I heard from every side wailings poured forth and saw none that made them, so that, all bewildered, I stopped. I think he thought I thought that all these voices among the trunks came from people who were hiding from us, so the Master

said: 'If thou break off any little branch from one of these trees, all thy present thoughts will prove mistaken.'

Then I put out my hand a little and plucked a twig from a great thorn, and its trunk cried: 'Why dost thou tear me?' And when it had turned dark with blood it began again: 'Why manglest thou me? Hast thou no spirit of pity? We were men and now are turned to stocks; thy hand might well have been more pitiful had we been souls of serpents.' As a green brand that is burning at one end drips from the other and hisses with the escaping wind, so from the broken splinter came forth words and blood together; at which I let fall the tip and stood as one afraid.

'If he could have believed before, wounded soul, what he had never seen but in my lines,[3] he would not have stretched forth his hand against thee,' my Sage replied 'but the thing being incredible made me prompt him to the deed which grieves myself. But tell him who thou wast, so that, for some amends, he may revive thy fame in the world above, where he is permitted to return.'

And the trunk said: 'Thou so allurest me with thy gentle speech that I cannot be silent, and let it not burden you if I am beguiled into talk for a little. I am he that held both the keys of Frederick's heart and turned them, locking and unlocking, so softly that I kept nearly every other man from his secrets; and I brought such faithfulness to the glorious office that I lost for it sleep and strength.[4] The harlot that never turned her shameless eyes from Caesar's household, the common bane and the vice of courts,[5] inflamed all minds against me,

and those inflamed so inflamed Augustus that happy honours turned to dismal woes. My mind, in scornful temper thinking by dying to escape from scorn, made me, just, unjust to myself. By the new roots of this tree I swear to you, never did I break faith with my lord, who was so worthy of honour; and if either of you return to the world let him establish my memory, which still lies under the blow that envy gave it.'

The Poet waited a little, then said to me: 'Since he is silent do not miss the chance but speak if thou wouldst question him further.' To which I answered him: 'Do thou ask him again of what thou thinkest will satisfy me; for I cannot, such pity fills my heart.'

He began again therefore: 'So may the man do freely for thee what thou askest of him, may it please thee, imprisoned spirit, to tell us further how the soul is bound in these knots, and tell us, if thou canst, whether from such members any is ever set free.'

Then the trunk blew hard, and soon that wind turned into a voice: 'You shall be answered briefly. When the fierce soul leaves the body from which it has uprooted itself, Minos sends it to the seventh depth. It falls into the wood, not in a place chosen for it but where fortune flings it. It sprouts there like a grain of spelt and rises to a sapling and to a savage tree; then the Harpies, feeding on its leaves, cause pain and for the pain an outlet. Like the rest we shall go for the cast-off flesh we have left, but not so that any of us will be clothed in it again, for it is not just that one should have that of which he robs himself. We shall drag them here

and through the dismal wood our bodies will be hung, each on the bush of its injurious shade.'

We were still intent on the trunk, thinking it had more to tell us, when we were surprised by a noise, like one aware of the boar and the chase approaching his post when he hears the beasts and the crashing of the branches; and there on our left were two, naked and scarred and flying so fast that they broke through every entanglement of the wood. He in front cried: 'Now come, come quickly, death!', and the other, who seemed to be falling behind: 'Thy legs were not so nimble, Lano, at the jousts of the Toppo,' and, perhaps because breath failed him, he crouched close in beside a bush.[6] Behind them the wood was full of black bitches, ravenous and swift like hounds loosed from the chain; on him that squatted there they set their teeth and tore him apart piecemeal, then carried off these suffering members.

My Escort then took me by the hand and led me to the shrub, which was making vain laments through the bleeding fractures. 'O Giacomo da Sant' Andrea,' it said 'how has it served thee to make a screen of me? What blame have I for thy guilty life?'

When the Master stopped over it he said: 'Who wast thou that through so many wounds blowest forth woeful speech with blood?'

And it said to us: 'O souls that have arrived to see the shameful havoc that has thus torn my leaves from me, gather them again at the foot of the wretched bush. I was of the city that changed for the Baptist its first patron, who for this will

always afflict it with his art; and were it not that at the passage of the Arno there yet remains some semblance of him, those citizens who afterwards rebuilt it on the ashes left by Attila would have laboured in vain.[7] I made a gibbet for myself of my house.'

5. Envy.

6. Lano of Siena and Giacomo of Padua, notorious spendthrift nobles of the 13th century; Lano was killed in battle on the river Toppo in 1288.

7. Florentines said that Mars, supplanted as patron of the city, plagued it with war and was only partly conciliated by the preservation of his statue, or its remains, at the head of the Ponte Vecchio. Florence was mistakenly supposed to have been destroyed by Attila.

CANTO XIV

The Third Round; the Violent against God, nature and art; the burning sand; the Blasphemers; Capaneus; the Old Man of Crete

SINCE love of my native place constrained me, I gathered up the scattered leaves and restored them to him, who was already hoarse.

Then we came to the boundary between the second round and the third, where is seen a fearful device of justice. To make the new things clear, I have to tell that we reached a plain that rejects every plant from its bed; the doleful wood is a garland round it, as round the wood the dismal moat. Here, at the very edge, we stayed our steps. The ground was a dry, deep sand, much like that once trod by the feet of Cato.[1] O vengeance of God, how must thou be feared by everyone who reads what was plain before my eyes! I saw many herds of naked souls who were all lamenting most miserably, and different laws seemed to be laid on them, some lying supine on the ground, some sitting all crouched up, and some moving on continually; those going about were the greatest number and those lying in torment fewest but their tongues most loosed

by the pain. Over all the great sand, falling slowly, rained down broad flakes of fire, as of snow in the mountains without wind. As Alexander, in the torrid Indian parts, saw flames falling on his host unbroken to the ground, for which he had the soil trampled by his troops to extinguish the vapours better before they spread,[2] so the eternal fire was descending there and the sand was kindled by it like tinder under the flint, to redouble the pain. There was no pause in the dance of the wretched hands, now here, now there, beating off from them the fresh burning.

I began: 'Master, thou who overcomest all things save the stubborn demons that came out against us at the entrance of the gate, who is that great one who seems as if he did not heed the fire and lies disdainful and scowling so that the rain seems not to soften him?'

And he himself, who had perceived that I was asking my Leader about him, cried: 'What I was living, that am I dead. Though Jove wear out his smith from whom in rage he seized the keen bolt with which, the last day, I was smitten—though he wear out the rest by turns at the black smithy in Mongibello, shouting "Help, help, good Vulcan!" as once on the field of Phlegra, and hurl his shafts at me with all his force, he should not so have the joy of vengeance.'[3]

Then my Leader spoke with such force as I had not heard him use before: 'Ah, Capaneus, in that thy pride is unquenched thou art punished the more; no torment but thy own raving would be pain to match thy fury.' Then he turned to me

again with gentler look and said: 'That was one of the seven kings who laid siege to Thebes and held, and seems to hold God in disdain and seems to esteem Him lightly; but his own revilings, as I told him, most fittingly adorn his breast. Come now after me, and watch still not to put thy feet on the scorching sand but keep them always close to the wood.'

In silence we came to where there gushes forth from the wood a little stream whose redness makes me shudder yet. As issues from the Bulicame a rivulet which the sinful women then divide among them,[4] so this took its way down across the sand; its bed and both its banks were of stone, with the margins alongside, from which I perceived that the passage was there.

'In all the rest that I have shown thee since we entered by the gate whose threshold is denied to none nothing has been given to thy eyes of such note as this stream here, which quenches all the flames above it.' These were my Leader's words, so that I begged him to grant me the food for which he had granted me the appetite.

'In mid-sea lies a waste land named Crete,' he said then 'under whose king the world once was pure.[5] A mountain is there, once glad with leaves and waters, which was called Ida; now it is deserted like a thing outworn. Rhea chose it once as the trusty cradle of her child, and there, to conceal him better when he cried, she made them raise an uproar. Within the mountain stands a great old man, who keeps his back turned to Damietta and gazes on Rome as on his mirror; his head is fashioned

of fine gold, his breast and arms are pure silver, then to the fork he is of brass, and from there down all of choice iron except that the right foot is baked clay, and he rests more on this than on the other. Every part except the gold is cleft by a fissure that drips with tears, which gather and force their way down through the cavern there, then take their course from rock to rock into this depth. They form Acheron and Styx and Phlegethon, then, going down by this narrow channel to where there is no more descent, they form Cocytus,[6] and what kind of pond that is thou shalt see, so that here I do not speak of it.'

And I said to him: 'If the stream here flows down thus from our world, why does it appear to us only at this boundary?'

And he to me: 'Thou knowest that the place is round, and although thou hast come far, always to the left in the descent to the bottom, thou hast not yet gone round the whole circle; so that if anything new appears to us it need not bring wonder to thy face.'

And I again: 'Master, where are Phlegethon and Lethe,[7] for about the one thou art silent and the other, thou sayest, comes from this rain of tears?'

'I am pleased indeed with all thy questions,' he replied 'but the boiling of the red water might well have solved one thou askest.[8] Lethe thou shalt see, but there beyond this abyss where the souls go to bathe themselves when their repented guilt is removed.'[9]

Then he said: 'Now it is time to go on from the wood; see that thou follow behind me. The margins, which are not on fire, make a path and above them all the flames are quenched.'

CANTO XV

The Sodomites; Brunetto Latini

Now one of the hard margins bears us on and the vapour from the stream makes a shade above so that it shelters the water and the banks from the fire. As the Flemings between Wissant and Bruges, fearing the flood rushing in on them, make their bulwark to drive back the sea, and as the Paduans do along the Brenta to protect their towns and castles before Chiarentana feels the heat,[1] these were made of the same fashion, except that the builder, whoever he was, made them neither so high nor so broad.

Already we had got so far from the wood that I should not have seen where it was if I had turned backward, when we met a troop of souls who were coming alongside the bank, and each looked at us as men look at one another under a new moon at dusk, and they puckered their brows on us like an old tailor on the eye of his needle.

Eyed thus by that company, I was recognized by one who took me by the hem and cried: 'How marvellous!' And I, when he reached out his arm to me, fixed my eyes on his baked looks so that the scorched features did not keep my mind from recognizing him and, bending my face to his, I answered: 'Are you here, Ser Brunetto?'[2]

And he: 'O my son, let it not displease thee if Brunetto Latini turn back with thee a little and let the train go on.'

I said to him: 'With all my heart I beg it of you, and if you wish me to sit with you I will, if it please him here with whom I go.'

'O son,' he said 'whoever of this flock stops one moment lies afterwards for a hundred years without shielding himself when the fire strikes him. Go on, therefore; I shall come at thy skirt and later rejoin my band who go mourning their eternal loss.'

I durst not descend from the track to go on his level, but I kept my head bent down as one that walks with reverence, and he began: 'What chance or destiny brings thee down here before thy last day, and who is this that shows the way?'

'Up above there in the bright life,' I answered him 'before my age was at the full,[3] I lost my way in a valley. Only yesterday morning I turned my back on it. He appeared to me when I was returning to it and by this road he leads me home.'

And he said to me: 'If thou follow thy star thou canst not fail of a glorious haven, if I discerned rightly in the fair life, and had I not died too soon, seeing heaven so gracious to thee I would have strengthened thee in thy work. But that thankless and malignant folk which came down of old from Fiesole and still keeps something of the mountain and the rock[4] shall become, for thy well-doing, thine enemy,—and with reason, for among the bitter sorbs it is not natural the sweet fig should come to fruit. Old fame in the world calls them blind, a people avaricious, envious and proud; see thou cleanse thyself from their ways. Thy fortune

holds for thee such honour that the one party and the other shall be ravenous against thee, but the grass shall be far from the goat. Let the Fiesolan beasts make fodder of themselves and not touch the plant—if on their dung-heap any yet springs up—in which there lives again the holy seed of those Romans who remained there when it became the nest of such wickedness.'

'Were all my prayers fulfilled' I answered him 'you had not yet been banished from humanity; for in my memory is fixed, and now goes to my heart, the dear and kind paternal image of you when many a time in the world you taught me how man makes himself immortal; and how much I am grateful for it my tongue, while I live, must needs declare. That which you tell of my course I write and keep with another text for comment by a lady who will know, if I reach her.[5] This much I would have plain to you, that, so my conscience do not chide me, I am ready for Fortune as she wills. Such earnest of my lot is not new to my ears. Turn Fortune her wheel then as she list—and the clown his mattock!'

On that my Master turned his head backward on the right and looked at me, then said: 'He is a good listener who takes note.'

None the less I continued talking with Ser Brunetto and asked him who of his companions were of most note and dignity.

And he said to me: 'Of some it is well to know; of the rest it will be more creditable to be silent, for the time would not serve for so much talk. Know in a word that they were all clerks and great and famous scholars, defiled in the world by one and the same sin. Priscian[6] goes on with that

wretched crowd, and Francesco d'Accorso;[7] and if thou hast a craving for such scurf, him thou mightst see there that was translated by the Servant of the Servants from the Arno to the Bacchiglione, where he left his sin-strained nerves.[8] I would say more, but I cannot go farther talking with thee, for I see there a new cloud rising from the sand; people are coming with whom I must not be. Let my *Treasure*, in which I yet live, be commended to thee; and I ask no more.'

Then he turned about and seemed like one of those that run for the green cloth in the field at Verona,[9] and he seemed not the loser among them, but the winner.

5. 'Another text' is Farinata's prophecy in Canto x, which Virgil bade Dante refer to Beatrice for explanation.

6. Famous grammarian of the 6th century whose Latin Grammar was in common use in the Middle Ages.

7. Noted lawyer and teacher in Bologna University and later at Oxford in the 13th century.

8. Andrea de' Mozzi, of a noble Florentine family, Bishop of Florence in Dante's youth, transferred for scandalous life to Vicenza on the Bacchiglione, where he died soon after. 'Servant of the Servants of God', an ancient title of the Pope, here used in irony for Boniface VIII.

9. Annual foot-race in Verona with naked runners, in which prizes were given to the first and the last.

CANTO XVI

The three Florentines; the edge of the pit

I WAS already at a point where the resounding of the water that fell into the next circle was heard like the hum of beehives, when three shades set out together running from a crowd which was passing under the rain of fierce torment. They came towards us, each crying: 'Stop thou, who by thy dress seemest to be one from our degenerate city.' Ah me, what wounds old and new I saw in their members, burnt in by the flames! It grieves me still only to remember them.

My Teacher listened to their cries, then turned his face to me and said: 'Wait, to these we must show courtesy, and were it not for the fire which the nature of the place discharges I would say that haste is more fitting for thee than for them.'

As soon as we stopped they resumed their former pace, and when they reached us all three made a wheel of themselves as champions are used to do, naked and oiled, watching their advantage for a grip before the exchange of thrusts and blows; and thus wheeling each kept directing his face towards me, so that they had both their neck and their feet in continual movement.

And one began: 'If the misery of this sandy place and our aspect blackened and hairless bring us and our petitions into contempt, may our fame incline

thy mind to tell us who thou art that thus securely movest living feet through Hell. He in whose steps thou seest me tread, though he goes naked and peeled, was of greater station than thou thinkest; he was grandson of the good Gualdrada, Guido Guerra by name,[1] and in his life he did much with counsel and with sword. The other, pressing the sand behind me, is Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, whose voice should have been heeded in the world above; and I who am put with them in torment was Jacopo Rusticucci,[2] and truly my savage wife, more than all else, has wrought me ill.'

Had I been sheltered from the fire I would have thrown myself down among them and I think my Teacher would have suffered it; but since I should have been burnt and baked, fear overcame my good-will which made me eager to embrace them. Then I began: 'Not contempt, but grief, your condition fixed within me so deep that it will be long before it wholly leaves me, as soon as the words of my lord here made me think that such men as you were coming. I am of your city, and your deeds and honoured names I have always recounted and heard with affection. I am leaving the gall and going on for the sweet fruits promised me by my truthful Leader; but first I must go down to the centre.'

'So may the soul long direct thy members and thy fame shine after thee,' he replied in turn 'tell us if courtesy and valour abide in our city as they did, or if they are quite gone from it; for

Guglielmo Borsiere,[3] who has been a short time in pain with us and goes yonder with our company, afflicts us greatly with his words.'

'The new people and the sudden gains have begot in thee, Florence, arrogance and excess so that already thou weepst for it!' This I cried with lifted face; and the three, taking it for answer, looked at each other as men stare on hearing the truth. 'If other times it costs thee as little to satisfy others,' they all replied 'happy art thou, speaking thus at thy pleasure. Therefore if thou escape from these dark regions and return to see again the beauty of the stars, when it will rejoice thee to say "I was there", do thou speak of us to men.'

Then they broke the wheel and in their flight their nimble legs seemed wings; an *Amen* could not have been said so quickly as they vanished. It seemed good to the Master, therefore, to go on. I followed him, and we had gone only a little way when the sound of the water was so near that we could scarcely have heard each other speak. As that river which is the first to hold its own course from Monte Veso eastward on the left slope of the Apennines—called the Acquacheta above, before it pours into its lower bed and loses that name at Forli—reverberates there over San Benedetto dell'Alpe by falling at one bound where there might well have been a thousand;[4] thus, down a precipitous bank, we found that dark water resounding so that before long it would have stunned our ears.

I had a cord girt about me, with which I once thought to take the leopard with the painted skin.[5]

After I had loosed it from me completely as my Leader bade, I passed it to him coiled and knotted together; then, swinging round on his right side, he flung it some distance out from the edge down into the depth of the abyss.

'Surely' I said within myself 'something strange must answer the strange signal which the Master so follows with his eye.'

Ah, how careful men should be with those who not only see the deed but look with understanding into the thoughts! He said to me: 'Soon will come up what I look for and what thy mind dreams of; soon it must be discovered to thy sight.'

A man should always close his lips, as far as he can, to the truth that has the face of a lie, since without fault it brings him shame, but here I cannot be silent; and by the strains of this Comedy—so may they not fail of lasting favour—I swear to thee, reader, that I saw come swimming up through that gross and murky air a figure amazing to the stoutest heart, even as he returns who goes down some time to loose the anchor that is caught on a reef or something else hid in the sea, stretching upward and drawing in his feet.

3. Said to have been a Florentine purse-maker of the time.

4. The Acquacheta ('Quiet Water'), a mountain stream making a fall in time of flood near the old monastery of San Benedetto dell' Alpe and farther down joining the Montone, 'the first' south of the Po to enter the Adriatic.

5. Canto i.

CANTO XVII

Geryon; the Usurers; the descent to Malebolge

"Lo, the beast with the pointed tail, that passes mountains and breaks through walls and arms! Lo, he that infects all the world!' Thus my Leader began to speak to me, and he beckoned him to come ashore near the end of the stony causeway; and that foul image of fraud came on and landed his head and chest, but did not draw his tail on to the bank. His face was the face of a just man, so gracious was its outward aspect, and all the rest was a serpent's trunk; he had two paws, hairy to the armpits, and the back and breast and both the flanks were painted with knots and circlets—Tartars or Turks never made stuffs with more colours in ground and embroidery, nor were such webs laid by Arachne on the loom.[1] As boats sometimes lie at the shore, part in the water and part on land, and as there among the German gluttons the beaver settles itself to take its prey,[2] so the vile brute lay on the rim that bounds the great sand with stone. All his tail was quivering in the void, twisting upwards the poisonous fork that armed the point like a scorpion's.

My Leader said: 'Now we must bend our way a little, as far as that malignant beast that couches there.'

We descended, therefore, on our right and went ten paces along the edge, so as to keep well away from the sand and the flames; and when we reached him I saw people beyond sitting on the sand, near where it falls away.

Here the Master said to me: 'That thou mayst carry away full experience of this round, go and see their condition. Let thy talk there be brief. Till thou return I will speak with this creature that he may lend us his strong shoulders.'

So I went by myself still farther along the extreme edge of that seventh circle to where the unhappy folk were seated. Through the eyes their pain was bursting forth; on one side and the other they defended themselves with their hands, sometimes from the flames, sometimes from the burning soil, like dogs in summer that ply, now snout, now paw, when they are bitten by fleas or gnats or gad-flies. When I set my eyes on the faces of some on whom the grievous fire was falling, I did not know one of them; but I observed that from the neck of each hung a pouch of a certain colour and device, and on these they seemed to feast their eyes. And when I came among them, looking about, I saw, azure on a yellow purse, the face and form of a lion; then, continuing my inspection, I saw another, blood-red, which showed a goose whiter than butter. And one that had a sow azure and gravid stamped on his white wallet[3] said to me: 'What dost thou in this pit? Take thyself off, and, since thou art still in life, know that my townsman Vitaliano[4] will sit here on my left. Among these Florentines I am

of Padua; many a time they din my ears, shouting: "Let the sovereign knight come, who will bring the pouch with the three goats!" '[5] Then he writhed his mouth and thrust out his tongue, like an ox that licks its nose, and I, fearing lest a longer stay should anger him who had warned me to make it short, turned back from the weary souls.

I found my Leader already mounted on the croup of the savage brute, and he said to me: 'Now be strong and bold. The descent henceforth is by such stairs as this. Mount in front, for I wish to be between that the tail may not harm thee.'

As one so near the shivering-fit of the quartan that his nails are already blue and he trembles all over at the mere sight of shade, such I became at these words of his; but shame threatened me, which makes a servant brave before a good master, and I settled myself on those great shoulders. I wished to say, but the voice did not come as I thought, 'See that thou embrace me!' But he who succoured me another time in another peril clasped me in his arms as soon as I mounted and supported me, then said: 'Geryon,[6] now move; let the circles be wide and the descent slow; remember the new burden thou hast.'

As the bark backs out little by little from its place, so Geryon drew out thence and, when he felt himself quite clear, turned his tail where his breast had been and, stretching it out, moved it like an eel and gathered in the air with his paws. No greater fear, I think, had Phaeton[7] when he let go the reins and the sky was scorched as it

shows still, nor wretched Icarus[8] when he felt his sides losing their wings by the melting wax and his father cried to him: 'Thou takest the wrong way', than was mine when I saw that I was in the air on every side and saw everything lost to sight except the beast. He goes swimming slowly on, wheeling and descending, but I am not conscious of it except for the wind blowing in my face and from below. I heard now on our right the torrent making a hideous roar below us, at which I stretched forth my head and looked down; then I was more afraid for the dismounting, for I saw fires and heard wailings, so that I cowered back all trembling. And I saw then—for I had not seen it before—our descent and circling by the great torments that drew near on every side.

As the falcon that has been long on the wing and without sight of lure or bird makes the falconer cry: 'Alack, thou stoopest!' descends weary, with a hundred wheels, to where it set out swiftly, and alights, angry and sullen, at a distance from its master, so Geryon set us down at the bottom, close to the foot of the jagged rock, and, relieved of our weight, vanished like an arrow from the string.

5. Buiamonte, a leading Florentine money-lender.

6. Geryon, a monster killed by Hercules, represented in medieval legend as enticing strangers to be his guests and killing them.

7. Phaeton, entrusted by his father Apollo with the chariot of the sun for a day, misguided it and the Milky Way shows where the sky was scorched.

8. Daedalus fixed wings on his son Icarus with wax; when Icarus flew too near the sun the wax melted and he fell into the sea.

CANTO XVIII

The Eighth Circle; the Fraudulent; the Malebolge; the First Bolgia; the Panders and Seducers; Caccianemico; the Second Bolgia; the Flatterers

THERE is a place in Hell called Malebolge,[1] all stone of iron colour like the wall that goes round it. Right in the middle of the baleful space yawns a pit of great breadth and depth, of whose structure I shall tell in its own place, so that the belt left between the pit and the high rocky bank is round, and its bottom is divided into ten valleys. As, where successive moats encircle a castle to guard its walls, the space they occupy presents a ground-plan, such was the design these made there; and as such fortresses have bridges from their thresholds to the outside bank, so from the base of the rock ran ridges that struck across the dikes and ditches as far as the pit, which cuts them short and gathers them in. In this place we found ourselves, dropped from Geryon's back, and the Poet held to the left and I came on behind.

On our right hand I saw new anguish, new torments and new scourgers, for with these the first ditch was full. The sinners at the bottom were naked. On this side of the middle they came facing us, and on the other along with us but with greater

strides—just as on account of the great throng in the year of the Jubilee the Romans took measures for the people to pass over the bridge, so that all on the one side of it faced towards the Castle and went to Saint Peter's and on the other they went towards the Mount.[2] On this side and on that along the gloomy rock I saw horned demons with great whips lashing them cruelly behind. Ah, how they made them lift their heels at the first strokes! Truly none waited for the second or the third.

While I was going on my eyes were met by one of them, and I said quickly: 'Of him there I once saw enough'; so that I held back my steps to make him out and my gentle Leader stopped with me and gave me leave to go back a little. And that scourged soul thought to conceal himself, lowering his face; but to little purpose, for I said: 'Thou casting thy eyes on the ground, if the features thou bearest do not deceive me, art Venedico Caccianemico.[3] But what brings thee into such a biting pickle?'[4]

And he answered me: 'Unwillingly I tell it; but thy plain speech, which makes me remember the old world, compels me. It was I who brought Ghisolabella to do the will of the Marquis, however the vile story is told. And I am not the only Bolognese lamenting here; in truth this place is so full of them that not so many tongues have learned to say *sipa* between the Savena and the Reno,[5] and if thou wouldst have evidence and confirmation of this, recall to mind our avaricious hearts.'

While he was speaking a demon smote him with his scourge and said: 'Off, pander! here are no women to coin.'

I rejoined my Escort; then, with a few steps, we came to where a ridge went out from the bank. This we ascended without difficulty and turning to the right on its crags we left these eternal circlings.[6]

When we were at the place where it yawns beneath to give passage to those under the lash the Leader said: 'Stop, and let the sight of these other ill-born souls fall on thee, whose faces thou hast not yet seen because they were going our way.'

From the ancient bridge we looked at the train coming towards us on the other side, driven with whips like the first; and the good Master, without my asking, said to me: 'Look at that great one coming, who for all his pain does not seem to shed a tear. How kingly is his aspect still! He is Jason, who by courage and craft bereft the men of Colchis of the Fleece.[7] He passed by the isle of Lemnos when the bold and pitiless women had given all their men to death, and there with tokens and fair words he beguiled Hypsipyle, the maid who before had beguiled all the rest. He left her there pregnant and forlorn. Such guilt condemns him to such torment, and Medea too is avenged. With him go all who deceive in like fashion, and let this suffice for knowledge of the first valley and of those it holds in its jaws.'

We were now at the place where the narrow track cuts across the second dike and makes of that the abutment to another arch. Here we heard people moaning in the next ditch, puffing with their snouts and smiting themselves with their palms. The

banks were crusted by the exhalation from below with a mould that sticks on them and is repugnant to eyes and nose, and the bottom is so hollowed out that there is no place from which to see it except by mounting to the crown of the arch, where the ridge overhangs most. We went there, and thence in the moat below I saw people plunged in a filth which seemed to have come from human privies, and searching down there with my eyes I saw one with his head so befouled with ordure that it did not appear whether he was layman or cleric. He shouted at me: 'Why lookest thou so greedily at me more than at the others in their filth?'

And I answered: 'Because, if I remember rightly, I saw thee once with dry hair, and thou art Alessio Interminei of Lucca;[8] therefore I eye thee more than all the rest.'

Then he, beating on his crown: 'Down here my flatteries have sunk me with which my tongue was never cloyed.'

After that the Leader said to me: 'Try to thrust thy head a little farther forward, so as to get a right view of the face of that foul and dishevelled drab who is scratching herself there with her filthy nails and is now squatting, now standing up. It is Thais, the whore who answered her lover when he said: "Have I much favour with thee?", "Nay, beyond measure!"[9] And with that let our sight be satisfied.'

5. Between these rivers is Bologna, and *sipa* is Bolognese dialect for *sì* (yes); there are more Bolognese here than in Bologna itself.

6. Possibly a reference to the medieval custom by which criminals made the 'circuit' of the city before execution.

7. Jason, chief of the Argonauts' voyage in search of the Golden Fleece, seduced and abandoned Hypsipyle, Princess of Lemnos, who had concealed and saved her father when the women of Lemnos agreed to kill all the men,—and later Medea, Princess of Colchis, who had helped him to secure the Fleece.

8. Not otherwise known.

9. An incident in a comedy of Terence.

CANTO XIX

The Third Bolgia; the Simonists; Pope Nicholas III

Ah, Simon Magus,[1] and you his wretched followers, who, rapacious, prostitute for gold and silver the things of God which should be brides of righteousness, now must the trumpet sound for you, for your place is in the third pouch.

We were now at the next tomb and had climbed to that part of the ridge which hangs right over the middle of the ditch. O Wisdom Supreme, how great is the art Thou showest, in Heaven, on earth, and in the evil world, and how justly does Thy power dispense! I saw along the sides and on the bottom the livid stone full of holes all of one size, and each was round. They seemed to me of a width not more or less than those that were made in my beautiful Saint John[2] as fonts for baptism, one of which, not many years ago, I broke for one that was drowning in it—and to this I set my seal, to clear the mind of everyone. From the mouth of each projected the feet of a sinner and the legs as far as the calf, and the rest was inside; all of them had both soles on fire, from which their joints writhed with such violence that they would have snapped withies or

ropes. As flame on oily things moves only over the outer surface, so it did there from the heels to the toes.

'Who is that one, Master, that writhes in his torment more than any of his fellows' I said 'and is licked by a redder flame?'

And he answered me: 'If thou wilt have me carry thee down there by that more sloping bank,[3] thou shalt know from himself of him and of his misdeeds.'

And I: 'All is well for me that is thy pleasure. Thou art my Lord and knowest that I depart not from thy will; thou knowest too what I do not speak.'

Then we came on to the fourth dike, turned and descended on our left down to the pitted and narrow bottom, and the good Master did not set me down from his haunch till he brought me to the hole of him that so lamented with his shanks.

'Whoever thou art,' I began 'unhappy soul that art held upside down, planted like a post, if thou art able, speak.'

I stood there, like the friar that shrives the treacherous assassin who after being fixed calls him back so that he delays his death,[4] and he cried: 'Standest thou there already, standest thou there already, Boniface? By several years the writing lied to me. Art thou so soon sated with these gains for which thou didst not fear to take by guile the Lady Beautiful and then to do her outrage?'[5]

I became like those that stand as if mocked, not comprehending the reply made to them, and know not what to answer; then Virgil said: 'Tell him quickly, "I am not he, I am not he thou thinkest" '; and I answered as I was bidden.

At that the spirit twisted his feet together, then, sighing and with lamenting voice, he said to me: 'What dost thou want with me then? If to know

who I am concerns thee so much that thou hast come down the bank for it, know that I was invested with the great mantle; but in truth I was a son of the she-bear, so greedy to advance the whelps that above I pursed my gains, and here myself.[6] Beneath my head are dragged the others who went before me in simony, flattened through the fissures of the rock, and down there I shall fall in my turn when he comes for whom I took thee when I put my hasty question. But longer already is the time I have roasted my feet and stood thus inverted than he shall stay planted with his feet red; for after him shall come a lawless shepherd from the west of yet fouler deeds, one fit to cover both him and me.[7] He shall be a new Jason, like him we read of in the *Maccabees*,[8] and as with that one his king dealt softly, so shall he that rules France do with him.'

I do not know if on that I was overbold when all my answer to him was in this strain: 'Pray tell me now, how much treasure did our Lord require of Saint Peter before He gave the keys into his charge? Surely He asked nothing but "Follow me", nor did Peter or the others take gold or silver from Matthias when he was chosen for the place lost by the guilty soul.[9] Stay there then, for thou art rightly punished, and look well to the ill-got gain that made thee bold against Charles.[10] And were it not that reverence for the supreme keys which thou didst hold in the glad life still forbids it to me, I should use yet harder words; for your avarice afflicts the world, trampling on the good and exalting

the wicked. You shepherds it was the Evangelist had in mind when she that sitteth upon the waters was seen by him committing fornication with the kings, she that was born with the seven heads and had her strength from the ten horns so long as her bridegroom took pleasure in virtue.[11] You have made you a god of gold and silver, and what is there between you and the idolaters but that they worship one and you a hundred?[12] Ah, Constantine, to how much evil gave birth, not thy conversion, but that dower the first rich Father had from thee!'[13] And while I sang this song to him, whether bitten by anger or conscience he kicked out hard with both feet.

I believe indeed it pleased my Leader, he listened all the time with so satisfied a look to the words of truth I uttered. He took me, therefore, in both his arms and when he had me right up on his breast remounted by the way he had come down, and he did not tire of holding me close to him but carried me up to the summit of the arch that crosses from the fourth dike to the fifth. Here he gently set down his burden, gently for the ruggedness and steepness of the ridge, which would be a hard passage for goats. From it another valley was disclosed to me.

7. Clement V (1305–1314), a Gascon, owed his election to Philip of France and continued to be Philip's creature; he removed the Papal See from Rome to Avignon. Boniface would have 11 years to wait for Clement.

8. Jason 'supplanted his brother in the high priesthood, having promised to the king three hundred and three score talents of silver' (2 *Macc.* iv. 7).

9. Matthias, chosen apostle in place of Judas (*Acts* i. 15–26).

10. Charles of Anjou, brother of St Louis and King of Sicily, against whom Nicholas was supposed to have been bribed into joining a conspiracy.

11. The imagery of the Apocalypse (*Rev.* xvii. 1–3) is applied to the corrupted Papacy; the 'bridegroom' of the Church is the Pope, 'the seven heads' the gifts of the Spirit or the Sacraments, 'the ten horns' the Commandments.

12. Possibly a reference to the golden calf.

13. The Emperor Constantine, when he removed the Imperial Government to Byzantium in the 4th century, was supposed to have endowed the Church in the person of Pope Sylvester with the Imperial dominion in the west; the belief was based on the ancient forgery known as the Donation of Constantine.

CANTO XX

The Fourth Bolgia; the Diviners; Manto; the origin of Mantua

Of new pain I must make verses and find matter for the twentieth canto of the first book, which is of those in the depths. I was now wholly set on looking into the bottom disclosed there, which was bathed with tears of anguish, and I saw people along the great circular valley coming, silent and weeping, at the pace made by the litanies in this world. As my sight went lower on them, each seemed to be strangely twisted between the chin and the beginning of the chest, for the face was turned towards the loins and they had to come backwards, since seeing forward was denied them. Perhaps some time by stroke of palsy a man has been thus twisted right round, but I have not seen it nor believe it possible.

So God grant thee, reader, to gather fruit of thy reading, think now for thyself how I could keep my cheeks dry when I saw close at hand our form so contorted that the tears from the eyes bathed the buttocks at the cleft. I wept indeed, leaning on one of the rocks of the rugged ridge, so that my Escort said to me: 'Art thou too as witless as

the rest? Here pity lives when it is quite dead.[1] Who is more guilty than he that makes the divine counsel subject to his will?

'Raise, raise thy head and see him for whom the earth opened before the eyes of the Thebans, so that they all shouted: "Where art thou rushing to, Amphiaraus?[2] Why dost thou quit the fight?" And he did not stop in his plunge into the depth as far as Minos, who seizes everyone. Look how he has made a breast of his shoulders; because he would see too far ahead he looks behind and makes his way backwards.

'See Tiresias,[3] who changed semblance when from male he turned female, being transformed in every member, and must strike the two twined serpents again with his staff before he could resume his manly plumes.

'He that backs up to the other's belly is Aruns,[4] who in the hills of Luni, where the Carrarese that live below till the ground, had a cave among the white marbles for his dwelling; looking from it at the stars and the sea his prospect was without bound.

'And she that covers her breasts, which thou dost not see, with her loose tresses and has on that side all her hairy parts was Manto,[5] who searched through many lands, then settled in the place where I was born; and on this I would have thee hear me for a little. After her father had parted from life and the city of Bacchus was enslaved[6] she went for a long time about the world. Above in fair Italy, at the foot of the mountains that bound Germany over Tyrol, lies a lake which is called Benaco.[7] By a thousand springs and more, I suppose, Apennino[8] is bathed between Garda and Val Camonica by the water that settles in the lake there,

and in the middle of it is a spot where the pastors of Trent and Brescia and Verona, if they went that way, might give their blessing.[9] Peschiera, a strong and beautiful fortress to confront the Brescians and the Bergamese, lies at the lowest point of the surrounding shore, and there all that cannot remain in the bosom of Benaco must fall and becomes a river flowing down through green pastures. As soon as the water starts to run it is called no longer Benaco, but Mincio, as far as Governolo where it falls into the Po, and after a short course it comes to a level where it spreads and makes a marsh that is sometimes noisome in summer. Passing that way, the cruel virgin saw land in the middle of the fen, untilled and without inhabitants; there, to avoid all human intercourse, she stopped with her minions to ply her arts and lived and left there her empty body. Afterwards the people that were scattered round about gathered on that spot, which was strong because of the bog it had on every side, and they built the city over those dead bones, and from her who first chose the place called it Mantua, without other augury. Once the people within it were more numerous, before the folly of Casalodi was tricked by Pinamonte.[10] I charge thee, therefore, that if ever thou hear of another origin of my city thou let no false tale pervert the truth.'

And I said: 'Master, thy account is so sure for me and so holds my confidence that any other would be for me dead embers. But tell me of the people that are passing, if thou see any who are worthy of note, for to that alone my mind reverts.'

Then he said to me: 'He that from his cheeks spreads his beard over his swarthy shoulders was augur when Greece was left so empty of males that scarcely any remained for the cradles, and with Calchas he gave the moment for cutting the first cable in Aulis.[11] Eurypylus was his name, and thus my high tragedy[12] sings of him in a certain passage —as thou knowest well, who knowest it altogether.

'That other, so spare in the flanks, was Michael Scot,[13] who assuredly knew the game of magic frauds.

'See Guido Bonatti;[14] see Asdente, who now would fain have given his mind to the leather and the thread, but repents too late.

'See the wretched women who gave up the needle, the shuttle, and the distaff and turned fortune-tellers; they wrought spells with herbs and images.[15]

'But come now, for Cain with his thorns already holds the confines of both hemispheres and touches the waves below Seville,[16] and already last night the moon was round. Thou must remember it well, for it helped thee sometimes in the depth of the wood.'

While he talked thus with me we went on our way.

10. Count Casalodi, Guelf Lord of Mantua, was persuaded to exile the nobles by Pinamonte, a Ghibelline citizen, who then raised the people against Casalodi and seized his power, in 1272.

11. All the men of Greece had gone to the Trojan War; returning, they sent Eurypylus to consult the Oracle of Apollo on the time for sailing.

12. The *Aeneid* is called a tragedy as a poem in a lofty style.

13. Michael Scot, a famous Scotch scholar of the early 13th century at the court of Frederick II.

14. Bonatti, a famous writer on astrology of the later 13th century, private astrologer to Guido of Montefeltro (Canto xxvii). Asdente ('Toothless') was the nickname of a cobbler of Parma with a reputation for sooth-saying.

15. Herbs were used for love-philtres and poisons. The piercing or melting of human images of wax or silver was supposed to be fatal to the originals.

16. The moon was supposed to set beyond Spain, where the land hemisphere ended westward.

CANTO XXI

The Fifth Bolgia; the Barrators; Malacoda

THUS from bridge to bridge, talking of other things of which my Comedy is not concerned to sing, we came on and reached the summit, when we stopped to see the next fissure of Malebolge and the next vain tears; and I saw it strangely dark. As in the Arsenal of the Venetians[1] they boil the viscous pitch in winter to caulk their unsound ships—for they cannot sail then, and instead one builds himself a new ship and another plugs the ribs of his that has made many voyages, one hammers at the prow and another at the stern, this one makes oars, that one twists ropes, another patches jib and mainsail; so, not by fire but by divine art, a thick tar was boiling below there which stuck to the bank on every side. I saw it, but saw in it nothing but the bubbles raised by the boiling and the whole swelling up and settling together again.

While I was gazing fixedly down there, my Leader, saying: 'Beware, beware!', drew me to him from where I stood; then I turned like one that is eager to see what he must escape and is unmanned with sudden fear and while looking does not stay his flight, and I saw behind us a black devil come running up the ridge. Ah, how savage was his

aspect and how fierce he seemed to me in his action, with open wings and light on his feet! His shoulder, which was sharp and high, was laden with both thighs of a sinner and he held him clutched by the tendons of his feet.

He spoke from our bridge: 'You Malebranche,[2] here is one of the Ancients of Santa Zita;[3] put him under, while I go back for more to that city, which is well stocked with them. Every man there is a barrator, all but Bonturo;[4] there *No* is made *Ay* for cash.'

He flung him down and turned back on the flinty ridge, and never was unleashed mastiff in such haste to follow the thief. The sinner plunged in and rose again doubled up, but the demons that were covered by the bridge cried: 'The Holy Face is not here for thee.[5] Here the swimming is not like that in the Serchio;[6] so, unless thou wouldst taste of our hooks, do not come out above the pitch.' Then they caught at him with more than a hundred gaffs and said: 'Thou must dance here under cover and pilfer out of sight, if thou canst.' Just so cooks make their scullions plunge the meat down into the cauldrons with their forks that it may not float.

The good Master said to me: 'That thou mayst not be seen to be here, crouch down behind a rock that may give thee some shelter, and for any outrage that may be offered to me do not thou be afraid, for I know about things here and was in a fray of the kind another time.'[7]

Then he went on past the head of the bridge, and as soon as he came on to the sixth bank he had need to show a bold front. With the fury and uproar of dogs that rush out on a mendicant who suddenly begs where he stops these rushed out from under

the bridge and turned all their hooks against him. But he cried: 'Let there be no mischief from any of you. Before you catch me with your forks one of you come forward and hear me; then consult about hooking me.'

All cried: 'Let Malacoda go.' So one moved, the rest standing still, and came to him, saying: 'What good will it do him?'

'Thinkest thou, Malacoda,' said my Master 'thou seest me come here secure thus far against all your defences without Divine Will and propitious fate? Let us pass, for it is willed in Heaven that I show another this savage way.'

Then his insolence was so fallen that he let the fork drop at his feet and said to the rest: 'He must not be touched then.'

And my Leader said to me: 'Thou that sittest crouching down among the rocks of the bridge, it is safe now for thee to come back to me.' And on that I rose and came to him quickly, and the devils all pushed forward so that I feared for their keeping of the compact; thus I once saw the soldiers that marched out of Caprona[8] under treaty afraid at seeing themselves among so many enemies. I drew near my Leader, pressing close to him, and did not turn my eyes from their looks, which were not pleasant; and they lowered their prongs, one saying: 'Wilt thou that I touch him on the rump?' and another answering: 'Ay, let him have it.' But that demon who held speech with my Leader turned round sharply and said: 'Hold, hold, Scarmiglione!'

Then he said to us: 'To go farther by this ridge is not possible, for the sixth arch lies all broken up at the bottom, but if it is still your pleasure to

go on make your way along this rocky dike; there is another ridge near which gives a passage. Yesterday, five hours later than now, completed a thousand, two hundred and sixty-six years since the road here was broken.[9] I am sending that way some of my company here, to look if any is out taking the air. Go with them, for they will not molest you. Come forward, Alichino and Calcabrina,' he went on 'and thou Cagnazzo, and let Barbariccia direct the squad; let Libicocco come too, and Draghignazzo, Ciriatto with the tusks, and Graffiacane, and Farfarello, and mad Rubicante. Scout round the boiling tar. Let these be safe as far as the next ridge that goes unbroken all the way over the dens.'

'Ah me, Master,' I said 'what is that I see? Pray, if thou know the way, let us go alone without escort; for on my part I want none. If thou art as wary as thou art wont, dost thou not see them grinding their teeth and threatening mischief to us with their brows?'

And he said to me: 'I will not have thee fearful. Let them go on grinding as they please, for they do it on account of the boiled wretches.'

They wheeled round by the dike on the left; but first each pressed his tongue between his teeth at their leader for a signal and he made a trumpet of his rear.

5. Ancient Byzantine crucifix in Lucca Cathedral.

6. The river near Lucca.

7. 'I was down here once before' (Canto ix).

8. A castle near Pisa, taken by the troops of Florence and Lucca in 1298.

9. The earthquake at the Crucifixion (Canto xii) happened, by Dante's reckoning, in A.D. 34, 1266 years before 1300 and at noon of Good Friday; it is now 7 a.m of Holy Saturday.

(This canto will be considered along with the next.)

CANTO XXII

Ciampolo and the devils

I HAVE seen before now horsemen move camp, and open the attack, and make their muster, and at times go off in flight; I have seen scouts over your land, Aretines;[1] and I have seen the movements of raiding-parties, clash of tournaments and running of jousts, now with trumpets and now with bells, with drums and with castle-signals and devices our own and foreign; and never yet have I seen horsemen move at so strange a bugle, nor footmen, nor ship sailing by mark of land or star.

We went with the ten demons; savage company indeed, but 'in church with saints and with guzzlers in the tavern.' My attention was all on the pitch, to see every feature of the moat and of the people that were burning in it. Like dolphins when with their arching back they give sailors a sign to take measures for saving their ship,[2] so from time to time one of the sinners would show his back to ease his pain and hide it again quicker than a lightning-flash; and as frogs lie in a ditch at the water's edge with only the muzzle out so as to hide their feet and the rest of their bulk, the sinners were lying all about, but as soon as Barbariccia came near they drew back under the boiling. I

saw—and my heart yet shudders at it—one linger thus, as it chances when one frog remains and another dives, and Graffiacane, who was just opposite him, hooked him by the tarry locks and drew him up, so that he seemed to me an otter.

I already knew the names of all of them, I had noted them so well when they were chosen and then observed what they called each other.

'See thou get thy claws on him, Rubicante, and take the skin off him,' the accursed creatures shouted all together; and I said: 'My Master, pray learn, if thou canst, who is the hapless wretch that has fallen into the hands of his enemies.'

My Leader went beside him and asked him whence he was, and he replied: 'I was born in the Kingdom of Navarre.[3] My mother put me in the service of a lord, for she had borne me to a wastrel who made an end of himself and of his fortune; then I was in the household of the good King Thibault[4] and there gave myself to the practice of barratry, for which I pay the reckoning in this heat.'

And Ciriatto, from whose mouth came out a tusk on each side like a boar's, let him feel how one of them could rip. The mouse had fallen among wicked cats, but Barbariccia caught him in his arms and said: 'Stand off while I grip him', then turned his face to my Master and said: 'Ask on, if thou wouldst learn more from him before another mangles him.'

My Leader said therefore: 'Tell us then, of the other sinners beneath the pitch knowest thou any that is Italian?' And he: 'I parted just now from one that was a neighbour of theirs. Would I were still under cover with him so that I should not fear claw or hook!'

And Libicocco said: 'We have borne too much,' and took him by the arm with his gaff so that he tore it and carried off a muscle; Draghignazzo too tried to take hold of him below by the legs, at which their captain wheeled round on them all with ugly looks.

When they were somewhat quieted, my Leader without delay asked him that was still gazing at his wound: 'Who is he from whom, as thou sayest, thou didst part unluckily to come ashore?'

And he replied: 'It was Fra Gomita, he of Gallura, a vessel of every fraud,[5] who had his lord's enemies in his hand and so dealt with them that all speak well of him; he "took the cash and let them off quietly", as he says, and in other affairs too he was no small barrator but a lordly one. Don Michael Zanche of Logodoro[6] keeps company with him and in talking of Sardinia their tongues are never weary. Oh me, see that other grinding his teeth! I would tell thee more, but I fear he is preparing to scratch my scurf.'

And the great marshal, turning to Farfarello who was rolling his eyes to strike, said: 'Take thyself off there, villainous bird!'

'If you would see or hear Tuscans or Lombards,' the frightened spirit then began again 'I will make some of them come; but let the Malebranche hold back a little so that they may not fear their vengeance, and I, remaining on this same spot, for one that I am will make seven come when I whistle, as our custom is when any of us gets out.'

Cagnazzo, when he heard that, lifted his snout and shook his head, saying: 'Hear the trick he has thought of for throwing himself down!' To which,

having great store of devices, he replied: 'I am over-tricky indeed, in getting more trouble for my friends!'

Alichino could not hold in, but in spite of the others said to him: 'If thou drop down I will come after thee, not at a gallop but swooping on my wings over the pitch. Let us leave the top and make a screen of the dike and see if by thyself thou art more than a match for us.'[7]

Now, reader, thou shalt hear new sport. All turned their eyes towards the other slope, he first that had been most loth to consent. The Navarrese chose his time well, planted his feet on the ground, and with a sudden leap broke away from the marshal; at which they were all smitten with self-reproach, but he most that was the cause of the blunder, so that he started out, crying: 'Thou art caught!' But it availed him little, for wings could not outstrip terror. The one went under and the other lifted his breast, flying upward. Just so the wild duck instantly plunges under on the approach of the falcon, which turns upward again, vexed and dispirited. Calcabrina went flying after him, furious at the trick but eager for the sinner to escape so as to have a scuffle, and as soon as the barrator had disappeared he turned his claws on his fellow and got to grips with him over the ditch; but the other was indeed a full-grown hawk to claw him well and both fell into the middle of the boiling pond. The heat unclutched them in a moment; but yet there was no getting out, they had so beglued their wings. Barbariccio, lamenting with the rest, made four of them fly to the other bank, each with his fork, and with all speed they descended

on this side and that to their posts. They pushed out their gaffs to the two that were limed, who were already cooked within their crust; and we left them in that broil.

4. Thibault II of Navarre (1253–1270).

5. Deputy of Nino Visconti, Judge of Gallura (*Purg.* viii), a division of Sardinia; hanged for his knavery.

6. Judge of Logodoro, another division of Sardinia.

7. They were to cross to the inner side of the dike, overlooking the next bolgia.

CANTO XXIII

The Sixth Bolgia; the Hypocrites; Fra Catalano

SILENT, alone, without escort, we went on, one before and the other after, as Friars Minor take their way. My thoughts were turned by the present quarrel on the fable of Aesop where he told of the frog and the mouse;[1] for *mo* and *issa*[2] are not more alike than the one case and the other, if we compare the beginning and the end attentively. And as one thought springs out of another, so from that one another was born in turn which redoubled my former fear. I thought, they are fooled because of us, and with such hurt and mockery as, I believe, must greatly vex them, and if anger is added to ill-will they will come after us savager than a dog snapping at a leveret. Already I felt my hair all bristling with fear and I stood looking back intently, when I said: 'Master, unless thou quickly hide thyself and me I am in terror of the Malebranche; we have them after us already. I so imagine them that already I hear them.'

And he said: 'Were I of leaded glass[3] I should not draw to me thy outward semblance sooner than I receive thy inward; just now thy thoughts joined with mine, being alike in action and aspect, so that of both I have made one sole

counsel. If it be that the slope on the right lies so that we can descend into the next ditch, we shall escape from the chase we imagine.'

He had not yet finished telling me his plan when I saw them coming with outstretched wings, not far off, meaning to take us. My Leader caught me instantly, like a mother who is wakened by the noise and sees beside her the flames kindled and catches up her child and flies and, more concerned for him than herself, does not stay even to put on a shift; and down from the ridge of the stony bank, lying on his back, he let himself go on the sloping rock that encloses the next ditch on one side. Never ran water so fast through a sluice to turn the wheel of a land-mill when coming nearest to the blades, as my Master went down that bank, bearing me along with him on his breast not as a companion but as his child. Hardly had his feet reached the bed of the depth below when they were on the height right over us; but there was nothing to fear, for the high providence which willed to set them as ministers of the fifth ditch deprives them all of power to leave it.

There below we found a painted people who were going round with very slow steps, weeping and looking weary and overcome. They had cloaks with cowls down over their eyes, of the cut that is made for the monks of Cluny,[4] so gilded outside that they were dazzling, but within all lead and so heavy that those Frederick imposed were of straw.[5] O toilsome mantle for eternity!

We turned again, still to the left, along with them, intent on their wretched weeping, but on

account of the load that weary people came on so slowly that we were in new company with each step we took; I said therefore to my Leader: 'Pray find someone that is known by deed or name, looking round as we go.'

And one who caught the Tuscan speech cried after us: 'Stay your steps, you that haste so through the dusky air; perhaps thou shalt have from me what thou askest.' At which my Leader turned round and said: 'Wait, and then go on at his pace.'

I stopped and saw two showing by their looks the great haste of their mind to join me, but the load and the crowded way delayed them. When they came up they gazed sideways at me for a while without uttering a word, then turned to each other and said: 'This man seems alive, by the working of his throat, and if they are dead by what privilege do they go uncovered with the heavy stole?' Then they said to me: 'O Tuscan, who art come to the assembly of the hypocrites of a sad countenance, do not disdain to tell us who thou art.'

And I said to them: 'I was born and grew up on the fair stream of Arno, in the great city, and am with the body I have always had; but who are you down whose cheeks such pain distils as I see, and what penalty is upon you that glitters so?'

And one of them answered me: 'The orange cloaks are of lead, so thick that the weight makes their balances creak thus. We were Jovial Friars[6] and Bolognese, I Catalano and he Loderingo by name, and we were chosen together by thy city, where it was the custom to take one man alone, to keep the peace, and what we were may still be seen round the Gardingo.'[7]

I began: 'O Friars, your evil deeds'—but I said no more, for there caught my eye one crucified on the ground with three stakes. When he saw me he writhed all over, blowing in his beard with sighs; and Fra Catalano, observing it, said to me: 'That transfixed one thou art looking at counselled the Pharisees that it was expedient to make one man suffer for the people.[8] He is stretched naked, as thou seest, across the way and must feel the weight of each that passes; and in the same fashion his father-in-law is racked in this ditch, and the rest of that council which was a seed of evil for the Jews.'[9]

Then I saw Virgil marvelling over him that was stretched crosswise so vilely in the eternal exile. Then he directed his words to the Friar: 'May it please you, if it is permitted, to tell us if there lies any passage on the right by which we two can go out from here, without requiring some of the black angels to come and take us from this bottom.'

He replied then: 'Nearer than thou hopest is a ridge of rock that starts from the great encircling wall and spans all the cruel valleys, except that at this one it is broken down and does not go over it. You will be able to mount by the ruin that slopes against the side and is piled up on the bottom.'

My Leader stood for a moment with bent head, then said: 'An ill account of the business he gave that hooks the sinners over there.' And the Friar: 'I once heard them tell in Bologna of the Devil's many vices, among which I heard that he is a liar and the father of lies.'

Then my Leader went on with great strides, his looks disturbed somewhat with anger; so I left these burdened souls, following the prints of the dear feet.

CANTO XXIV

The Seventh Bolgia; the Thieves; Vanni Fucci

In that part of the youthful year when the sun refreshes his locks under Aquarius and already the long nights are moving away to the south,[1] when the rime copies on the ground the likeness of her white sister but her pen does not long keep its point, the peasant who is short of fodder rises and looks out and sees the fields all white, at which he smites his thigh, turns back into the house and goes here and there complaining like a poor wretch that knows not what is to be done, then comes back and gathers hope again when he sees how in a little time the world has changed its face, and grasps his staff and drives forth his sheep to pasture; thus the Master made me lose heart when I saw his brow so clouded and thus quickly came the plaster to the hurt, for as soon as we reached the shattered bridge my Leader turned to me with that sweet look which I saw first at the foot of the mountain. He opened his arms, having chosen some plan in his mind, first examining the ruin well, and took hold of me; and like one that works and reckons and seems always to provide beforehand, so, while lifting me up towards the top of one great boulder, he was looking out another rock, saying: 'Take hold of that next, but try first if it will bear thee.' It was no way for one wearing

the mantle, for we—he light and I pushed—could hardly mount from jag to jag, and had it not been that on that dike the slope was shorter than on the other, I do not know for him, but I should have been quite beaten; but since all Malebolge inclines towards the mouth of the nethermost pit, the lie of each of the valleys makes one side higher and the other lower. We did at length come up to the point where the last stone breaks off, and the breath was so spent from my lungs when I was up that I could go no farther, but sat down as soon as I got there.

'Now must thou thus cast off all sloth,' said the Master 'for sitting on down or under blankets none comes to fame, and without it he that consumes his life leaves such trace of himself on earth as smoke in air or foam on the water. Rise, therefore, conquer thy panting with the soul, which conquers in every battle if it sink not with its body's weight. There is a longer stair which must be climbed;[2] it is not enough to have left these spirits. If thou understandest me, act now so that it profit thee.'

I rose then, showing myself better furnished with breath than I felt, and said: 'Go, for I am strong and fearless.'

We took our way up the ridge, which was craggy and narrow and difficult and far steeper than the last, and I talked as I went, so as not to seem faint; at which a voice came forth from the next ditch, not able to articulate. I do not know what it said, though I was already on the crown of the arch that crosses there, but he that spoke seemed to be moved with anger. I had bent downward,

but my keen gaze could not reach the bottom for the dark; I said therefore: 'Pray, Master, go on to the next encircling bank and let us descend the wall, for from this point I not only hear without understanding but I look down and distinguish nothing.'

'I give thee no answer' he said 'but to do it, for a fair request should be followed by the deed in silence.'

We descended at the end of the bridge where it joins the eighth bank and then the ditch was plain to me, and there within it I saw a fearful throng of serpents and of kinds so strange that the memory yet chills my blood. Let Lybia with her sands boast no more; for if she breeds chelydri, jaculi and phareae and cenchres with amphisbaena[3] she never showed plagues so many or so malignant, with all Ethiopia and the regions on the Red Sea. Among this cruel and most dismal swarm ran people naked and terrified, without hope of hiding-place or heliotrope.[4] They had their hands tied behind with serpents. These thrust through their loins the head and tail, which were knotted in front.

And lo, on one that was at our bank sprang a serpent which transfixed him at the point where the neck is joined to the shoulders, and never was *I* or *O* written so fast[5] as he took fire and burnt and must sink all turned to ashes; and when he was on the ground thus dissolved the dust drew together of itself and took instantly the same form again. Thus it is agreed by the great sages[6] that the phoenix, when she approaches her five-hundredth year, dies and then is born again; in her

lifetime she feeds neither on herbs nor grain, but only on tears of frankincense and of balsam, and nard and myrrh are her last winding-sheet. And as one that falls, not knowing how, by force of a devil dragging him to the ground or by some vital obstruction that binds a man, and when he rises stares about him all bewildered with the great anguish he has suffered, and sighs as he looks; such was the sinner when he rose. Ah, the power of God, how stern it is, pouring forth such strokes for vengeance!

Then my Leader asked him who he was, to which he answered: 'I rained from Tuscany not long since into this wild gullet. A beast's life pleased me, not a man's, mule as I was. I am Vanni Fucci, the Beast, and Pistoia was my fitting den.'[7]

And I said to my Leader: 'Tell him not to slip off, and ask what crime thrust him down here, for I saw him a man of blood and rage.'

And the sinner, who heard, did not dissemble, but set his mind and his look on me and coloured with wretched shame, then said: 'I suffer more that thou hast caught me in the misery in which thou seest me than when I was taken from the other life. I may not refuse to answer thy question. I am put down so far because I was a thief in the Sacristy of the Fair Ornaments and then it was laid falsely on another.[8] But lest thou rejoice in this sight, if ever thou go forth from the dark regions, open thy ears to what I declare to thee, and hear. Pistoia first thins herself of Blacks, then Florence renews her people and her ways.[9] Mars draws a vapour from Val di Magra, which is wrapt in turbid clouds, and with a violent and bitter

storm battle shall be joined on the field of Piceno,
where the fire shall burst of a sudden through the
cloud so that every White shall be struck by it.
And I have told it that it may grieve thee.'

7. Fucci was the bastard son ('mule') of a Pistoian noble; violent leader of the Blacks of Pistoia, perhaps known as Beast Fucci.

8. The sacristy of Pistoia Cathedral was famed for its treasures; some were stolen in 1293 and an innocent man, it is said, hanged for the theft. Fucci's guilt, apparently, was not known till after his death.

9. The division of the Pistoian Guelfs into Blacks and Whites spread to Florence, where the domination of the Blacks led to Dante's exile. The 'vapour' was the leader of the Blacks, a member of the great Malaspina family, who defeated the Pistoian Whites in 1302.

CANTO XXV

The five Florentines and the serpents

AT the end of his words the thief lifted up his hands with both the figs,[1] crying: 'Take that, God, for at Thee I square them!' From that time forth the serpents were my friends, for one coiled itself then about his neck, as if to say: 'I will not have thee say more', and another about his arms and bound him again, so rivetting itself in front that he could not make a motion with them.

Ah, Pistoia, Pistoia, why dost thou not resolve to burn thyself to ashes and to last no longer, since thou surpassest thy own seed in wickedness?[2] Through all the dark circles of Hell I saw no spirit so arrogant against God, not him that fell from the walls at Thebes.[3]

He fled, not speaking another word, and I saw a centaur full of rage come shouting: 'Where is he, where is the hardened wretch?' Maremma has not, I believe, as many snakes as he had on his croup up to where our form begins, and on his shoulders, behind the nape, lay a dragon with open wings which sets on fire whoever encounters it.

My Master said: 'That is Cacus, who beneath the rock of Mount Aventine made many a time a lake of blood.[4] He does not go in the same road with his brothers, for his fraud in stealing the great herd that lay near him, and for that his crooked

ways were ended under the club of Hercules, who gave him, perhaps, a hundred blows, and he felt not ten.'

While he spoke the Centaur ran past and three spirits came beneath us, of whom neither I nor my Leader was aware until they cried: 'Who are you?'; on which our talk broke off and we gave all our heed to them. I did not know them; but it happened, as often happens by some chance, that one had to name another, and he said: 'Where can Cianfa have stopped?' And at that, so that my Leader should remain attentive, I laid my finger from chin to nose.

If, reader, thou art now slow to credit what I shall tell, it will be no wonder, for I who saw it scarcely admit it to myself.

While I kept my eyes on them, lo, a serpent with six feet darts up in front of one and fastens on him all over; with the middle feet it clasped the paunch and with those in front seized the arms, then set its fangs in the one cheek and the other; the hind feet it spread on the thighs and thrust its tail between them and stretched it up over the loins behind. Never was ivy so rooted to a tree as the horrid beast intertwined the other's members with its own; then, as if they had been of hot wax, they stuck together and mixed their colours and neither the one nor the other appeared now what it was before; thus spreads over the paper before the flame a dark colour that is not yet black, and the white dies off. The other two were looking on and each cried: 'O me, Agnello, how thou changest! Lo, thou art now neither two

nor one!' Now the two heads had become one, when the two shapes appeared to us blended in one face in which the two were lost; two arms were made of the four lengths; the thighs with the legs, the belly and the chest, became such members as were never seen. Each former feature was blotted out; the perverted shape seemed both and neither, and such, with slow pace, it moved away.

As the lizard under the great scourge of the dog-days, passing from hedge to hedge, seems lightning if it cross the way, so appeared, making for the bellies of the other two, a small, fiery serpent, livid, and black as a pepper-corn; and that part by which we first receive our nourishment[5] it transfixed in one of them, then fell down before him stretched out. The one transfixed stared at it, but said nothing, only stood still and yawned, as if sleep or fever had come upon him. He kept looking at the serpent and it at him; the one from the wound, the other from the mouth, smoked violently, and their smoke met. Let Lucan now be silent with his tales of wretched Sabellus and Nasidius,[6] and let him wait to hear what now comes forth! Let Ovid be silent about Cadmus and Arethusa;[7] for if in his lines he turns him into a serpent and her into a fountain, I do not grudge it to him, for two natures face to face he never so transmuted that both kinds were ready to exchange their substance. They responded mutually in such order that the serpent split its tail into a fork and he that was wounded drew his footprints together, the legs with the thighs adhering to each other of themselves so that soon there was no mark of the juncture to be

seen; the divided tail took the shape that was lost there and its skin turned soft and the other's hard. I saw the arms draw in at the armpits and the brute's two paws, which were short, lengthen as much as these shortened; then the hind-paws, twisted together, became the member man conceals, and from his the wretch had put forth two feet. While the smoke veils the one and the other with new colour and on the one hand brings out the hair and on the other strips it off, the one rose and the other fell down, but neither turned aside the baleful lamps beneath which they exchanged visages. He that was erect drew his towards the temples, and out of the excess of matter that came there the ears issued from the bare cheeks; that which did not run back and was retained made of that excess a nose for the face and thickened the lips to the due size. He that was lying down drives the snout forward and draws back the ears into the head as the snail does its horns, and the tongue, which was whole and fit for speech before, divides, and the forked one of the other joins up, and the smoke stops. The soul that was become a brute fled hissing along the valley, the other talking and spitting after it.[8] Then he turned on it his new shoulders and said to the other shade: 'I'll have Buoso run on all fours, as I have done, along this road.'[9]

Thus I saw the seventh ballast change and interchange, and let the newness of it be my plea if in anything my pen be at fault.

And although my eyes were somewhat confused and my mind bewildered, these could not fly so

secretly that I did not clearly make out Puccio the Cripple, and he was the only one of the three companions that came first who was not changed; the other was he for whom, Gaville, thou dost mourn.

7. Cadmus, founder of Thebes, killed a dragon sacred to Mars and was transformed to a serpent. The nymph Arethusa, pursued by a river-god, called on Artemis and was changed into a fountain.

8. The human spittle was supposed to be poisonous to snakes.

9. The three first met were Agnello, Buoso and Puccio, of noble Florentine families but hardly known to us otherwise. Two Florentines, Cianfa and Francesco Cavalcanti, appear first as serpents, the former attacking Agnello and the latter Buoso. Francesco was killed for his oppressions by the people of the Tuscan village of Gaville and the family avenged his death.

CANTO XXVI

The Eighth Bolgia; the False Counsellors; Ulysses

REJOICE, Florence, since thou art so great that over land and sea thou beatest thy wings and through Hell thy name is spread abroad! Among the thieves I found five such citizens of thine that shame for them comes on me and thou risest not to great honour by them. But if near morning our dreams are true, thou shalt feel ere long that which Prato,[1] not to say others, craves for thee; and were it come already it would not be too soon. Would it were, since indeed it must, for it will weigh the more on me the more I age.

We set out, and, on the stairs which the projecting rocks had made for our descent before, my Leader mounted again and drew me up, and, following the lonely way among the rocks and splinters of the ridge, the foot made no speed without the hand.

I grieved then and grieve now anew when I turn my mind to what I saw, and more than I am wont I curb my powers lest they run where virtue does not guide them, so that, if favouring star or something better have granted me such boon, I may not grudge it to myself.

As many as the fire-flies which the peasant resting on the hill—in the season when he that lights the world least hides his face from us and at the hour when the fly gives place to the gnat[2]—sees along the valley below, in the fields, perhaps, where he gathers the grapes and tills; with so many

flames the eighth ditch was all gleaming, as I perceived as soon as I came where the bottom was in sight. And as he that was avenged by the bears saw the chariot of Elijah at his departure when the horses reared and rose to heaven, who could not follow it with his eyes so as to see anything but the flame alone like a little cloud mounting up;[3] so each flame moves along the gullet of the ditch, for none shows the theft and every one steals away a sinner.

I was standing on the bridge, having risen up to see, so that if I had not taken hold of a rock I should have fallen below without a push; and my Leader, who saw me so intent, said: 'Within the flames are the spirits; each is swathed in that which burns him.'

'My Master,' I replied 'by hearing thee I am more certain, but already I thought it was so, and I already wished to ask thee who is in that fire which comes so cloven at the top that it seems to rise from the pyre where Eteocles was laid with his brother.'[4]

He answered me: 'Within there are tormented Ulysses and Diomed, and thus together they go under vengeance as once under wrath, and within their flame they groan for the ambush of the horse that made the gateway by which the noble seed of the Romans went forth; they lament within it the craft on account of which Deidamia dead still mourns Achilles, and there is borne the penalty for the Palladium.'[5]

'If they are able to speak within these lights,' I said 'I earnestly pray thee, Master, and pray again that my prayer avail a thousandfold that thou do not forbid me to stay till the horned flame comes near; thou seest how I bend toward it with desire.'

And he said to me: 'Thy prayer deserves much praise, therefore I consent to it. But do thou restrain thy tongue. Leave it to me to speak, for I have understood what thou wishest; for perhaps, since they were Greeks, they would disdain thy speech.'

After the flame had come where it seemed to my Leader the time and place I heard him speak in these words: 'O ye who are two within one fire, if I deserved of you while I lived, if I deserved of you much or little when in the world I wrote the lofty lines, do not move on, but let the one of you tell where, being lost, he went to die.'

The greater horn of the ancient flame began to toss and murmur just as if it were beaten by the wind, then, waving the point to and fro as if it were the tongue that spoke, it flung forth a voice and said: 'When I parted from Circe,[6] who held me more than a year near Gaeta before Aeneas so named it, not fondness for a son, nor duty to an aged father, nor the love I owed Penelope[7] which should have gladdened her, could conquer within me the passion I had to gain experience of the world and of the vices and the worth of men; and I put forth on the open deep with but one ship and with that little company which had not deserted me. The one shore and the other I saw as far as Spain, as far as Morocco, and Sardinia and the other islands which that sea bathes round. I and my companions were old and slow when we came to that narrow outlet where Hercules set up his

landmarks so that men should not pass beyond.[8] On my right hand I left Seville, on the other had already left Ceuta. "O brothers," I said "who through a hundred thousand perils have reached the west, to this so brief vigil of the senses that remains to us choose not to deny experience, in the sun's track, of the unpeopled world. Take thought of the seed from which you spring. You were not born to live as brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge." My companions I made so eager for the road with these brief words that then I could hardly have held them back, and with our poop turned to the morning we made of the oars wings for the mad flight, always gaining on the left. Night then saw all the stars of the other pole and ours so low that it did not rise from the ocean floor. Five times the light had been rekindled and as often quenched on the moon's under-side since we had entered on the deep passage, when there appeared to us a mountain, dim by distance, and it seemed to me of such a height as I had never seen before. We were filled with gladness, and soon it turned to lamentation, for from the new land a storm rose and struck the forepart of the ship. Three times it whirled her round with all the waters, the fourth time lifted the poop aloft and plunged the prow below, as One willed, until the sea closed again over us.'

CANTO XXVII

Guido da Montefeltro

ALREADY the flame was erect and still, having ceased to speak, and it was already leaving us with consent of the gentle Poet, when another coming on behind it made us turn our eyes to its point by a confused sound that came from it. As the Sicilian bull which bellowed for the first time—and it was just—with the cry of him who had shaped it with his file used to bellow with the voice of the victim, so that, though it was of brass, it yet seemed pierced with pain;[1] thus, having at first no course or outlet in the fire, the doleful words were transformed into its language. But after they had made their way up through the point, giving it the same vibration that the tongue had given in their passage, we heard it say: 'O thou to whom I direct my voice and who just now spoke in Lombard,[2] saying: "Now go thy way, I do not urge thee more", though I have come, perhaps, somewhat late, let it not irk thee to stay and speak with me; thou seest it irks not me, and I am burning. If thou hast fallen but now into this blind world from that sweet land of Italy whence I bring all my guilt, tell me if the Romagnoles have peace or war; for I was of the mountains there between Urbino and the height where Tiber is released.'[3]

I was still bent down and intent when my Leader touched me on the side and said: 'Speak thou; he is Italian.'

And I, being at once ready with the answer, began without delay to speak: 'O soul that art hidden down there, thy Romagna is not, nor ever was, without war in the hearts of her tyrants, but openly I left none there now. Ravenna stands as it has done for many a year; the Eagle of Polenta broods over it and covers Cervia with its pinions. The city which once bore long siege and made of the French a bloody heap finds itself again under the Green Claws. Both the Old and the Young Mastiff of Verrucchio who made ill disposal of Montagna drive their fangs where they are wont. The cities on the Lamone and on the Santerno the Young Lion in the White Lair controls, changing party from summer to winter; and the other whose flank the Savio bathes, as it lies between plain and mountain spends its life between tyranny and freedom.[4] Now who art thou, I beg of thee to tell us; be not more grudging than another has been to thee, so may thy name in the world maintain its place.'

After the fire had roared in its fashion for a time, it moved the sharp point to and fro and then gave breath thus: 'If I thought my answer were to one who would ever return to the world, this flame should stay without another movement; but since none ever returned alive from this depth, if what I hear is true, I answer thee without fear of infamy.

'I was a man of arms, and then a corded friar,[5] thinking, so girt, to make amends; and indeed my

thought had come true but for the Great Priest[6] —may ill befall him!—who put me back in the old sins, and how and wherefore I would have thee hear from me. While I informed the bones and flesh my mother gave me my deeds were those, not of the lion, but of the fox; I knew all wiles and covert ways and so practised their arts that their sound went forth to the end of the world. When I saw myself come to that part of my life when every man should lower the sails and gather in the ropes, that which before had pleased me then grieved me and with repentance and confession I turned friar, and—woe is me!—it would have served. The Prince of the new Pharisees—being at war near the Lateran and not with Saracens or Jews, for every one of his enemies was Christian and none had been at the taking of Acre or trading in the land of the Soldan[7]—regarded neither the supreme office and holy orders in himself nor, in me, that cord which used to make its wearers lean; but as Constantine sought out Sylvester in Soracte to cure his leprosy,[8] so this man sought me out as his physician to cure the fever of his pride. He asked counsel of me, and I was silent, for his words seemed drunken; and then he spoke again: "Do not let thy heart mistrust; I absolve thee henceforth, and do thou teach me how I may cast Palestrina to the ground. I have power to lock and to unlock Heaven, as thou knowest, for the keys are two which my predecessor did not hold dear."[9] Then the weighty arguments drove me to the point where silence seemed to me the worse offence, and I said: "Father, since thou dost cleanse me from

this sin into which I must now fall, large promise with scant observance will make thee triumph in the lofty seat." Then, as soon as I was dead, Francis came for me; but one of the black cherubim said to him: "Do not carry him off, do not cheat me; he must come down among my minions because he gave the fraudulent counsel and from then till now I have been by his hair. For he cannot be absolved who repents not, nor can there be repenting and willing at once, for the contradiction does not permit it." O wretched me, how I started when he took me, saying to me: "Perhaps thou didst not think I was a logician." He carried me to Minos, who coiled his tail eight times about his rough back and after biting it in great rage said: "This is one of the wicked for the thievish fire." Therefore I am lost where thou seest and, thus clothed, go in bitterness.'

When he had so ended his words the flame, grieving, departed, twisting and tossing the pointed horn.

We passed on, my Leader and I, over the ridge as far as the next arch, which spans the ditch where their dues are paid by those who, making division, gather their load.

7. Boniface was at feud with the Colonna, whose stronghold was Palestrina near Rome and who had surrendered on terms to the Papal forces; on Guido's advice Boniface broke faith and destroyed Palestrina. Acre, the last stronghold of the Christians in Palestine. fell to the Saracens in 1291, to the scandal of Christendom. An earlier pope had forbidden Christians to trade with Moslems, and Guido means that none of the Pope's Christian enemies had been contumacious.

8. Constantine, punished with leprosy for persecution of Christians, was directed in a dream to recall Pope Sylvester from his refuge in Mount Soracte and, on his conversion, was cured.

9. Pope Celestine V, who 'made the great refusal' (Canto iii).

CANTO XXVIII

The Ninth Bolgia; the Makers of discord; Piero da Medicina

WHO could ever tell, even with words untrammelled and the tale often repeated, of all the blood and the wounds I saw now? Surely every tongue would fail, for our speech and memory have not the capacity to take in so much. Were all the people assembled again who once in the fateful land of Apulia[1] bewailed their blood shed by the Trojans and in the long war which made the high-piled spoil of rings—as Livy writes who does not err—with those who suffered grievous strokes in the struggle with Robert Guiscard and those others whose bones are still in heaps at Ceperano where every Apulian was faithless, and there by Tagliacozzo where old Alardo conquered without arms;[2] and were one to show his wounded limb and another his cut off, it would be nothing to compare with the foul fashion of the ninth ditch.

No cask ever gapes by loss of end-board or stave like him I saw who was ripped from the chin to the part that breaks wind; between the legs hung the entrails; the vitals appeared, with the foul sack that makes excrement of what is swallowed. While I was all absorbed in the sight of him he looked at me and with his hands laid open his breast, saying: 'See now how I split myself; see how

Aboo Jahl[3] is mangled! Before me goes Aboo Lahab in tears, his face cleft from chin to forelock; and all the others thou seest here were in life sowers of scandal and schism and therefore are thus cloven. There is a devil behind here that decks us out thus cruelly, putting each of this kind to the edge of the sword again when we have passed round the doleful road; for the wounds have closed again before any comes again in front of him. But who art thou lingering on the ridge, perhaps to delay going to the penalty pronounced on thy own accusations?'[4]

'Neither has death yet reached him nor does guilt bring him for torment,' replied my Master 'but to give him full experience I, who am dead, must bring him down here through Hell from circle to circle; and this is as true as that I speak to thee.'

There were more than a hundred who, when they heard this, stopped in the ditch to look at me, in wonder forgetting the torment.

'Tell Fra Dolcino,[5] then, thou who wilt perhaps see the sun before long, to arm himself with victuals if he would not soon follow me here, so that stress of snow may not give the Novarese the victory which would else be hard to win.' When he had raised one foot to go on Mahomet said this to me, then set it on the ground and left us.

Another, who had his throat pierced, his nose cut off just under the eyebrows, and only one ear left, stopped with the rest to gaze in astonishment and before the others cleared his windpipe, which was all red outside, and said: 'O thou whom guilt

does not condemn and whom I saw above on Italian soil, if too great likeness do not deceive me, remember Piero da Medicina[6] if ever thou return to see the sweet plain that slopes from Vercelli to Marcabò, and make it known to the two chief men of Fano, both Messer Guido and Angiolello, that, unless our foresight here is vain, they shall be thrown out of their ship and drowned near La Cattolica through a fell tyrant's treachery.[7] Between the islands of Cyprus and Majorca Neptune never saw so great a crime, not of pirates nor of men of Greece. That traitor who sees with but one eye and holds the city which one here with me would fain never have seen will bring them to a parley with him and then deal so that for the wind of Focara they shall have no need of vow or prayer.'[8]

And I said to him: 'Point him out to me and explain, if thou wouldst have me carry news of thee above, who he is to whom that sight was bitter.'

Then he laid his hand on the jaw of one beside him and opened the mouth, crying: 'This is the man, and he does not speak; banished, he quenched Caesar's doubts, declaring that one prepared always loses by delay.' Ah, how aghast appeared to me, with tongue slit in the gullet, Curio, who was so bold of speech![9]

And one who had both the one hand and the other cut off, lifting the stumps through the murky air so that the blood befouled his face, cried: 'Thou wilt recall Mosca[10] too, who said, alas: "A thing done has an end!"—which was ill seed for the Tuscan people.'

'—and death to thy stock!' I added then; at which, heaping sorrow on sorrow, he went away like a man crazed with grief.

But I stayed to watch the troop and saw a thing I should fear simply to tell without more proof, but that conscience reassures me, the good companion which emboldens a man under the breastplate of his felt integrity. Verily I saw, and I seem to see it still, a trunk without a head going as were the others of the miserable herd; and it held the severed head by the hair swinging in its hand like a lantern, and that was looking at us and saying: 'Woe is me!' Of itself it made for itself a lamp, and they were two in one and one in two; how it can be He knows who so ordains. When it was just below the bridge it raised its arm high and with it the head so as to bring its words nearer us, and they were: 'See now my grievous punishment, thou who, breathing, goest looking on the dead; see if any other is so great as this. And, that thou mayst bear news of me, know that I am Bertran de Born, he that gave evil backing to the Young King.[11] I made rebellion between the father and the son; Ahithophel did no worse for Absalom and David with his wicked goadings.[12] Because I parted those so joined I carry my brain, alas, parted from its root in this trunk; thus is observed in me the retribution.'

CANTO XXIX

The Tenth Bolgia; the Personators, Alchemists, etc.; Griffolino; Capocchio

THE many people and the strange wounds had made my eyes so drunken that they were fain to stay and weep; but Virgil said to me: 'What art thou still gazing at? Why does thy look still rest down there among the miserable maimed shades? Thou hast not done this at the other depths. Consider, if thou think to number them, that the valley goes twenty-two miles round and already the moon is beneath our feet. The time is now short that is allowed to us and there is more to see than thou seest here.'

'If thou hadst given heed to my reason for looking,' I answered then 'perhaps thou wouldst have granted me a longer stay.'

Meantime the Leader was going on, and I went after him, already making my reply, and I added: 'Within that den where I held my eyes so intently just now I think a spirit, one of my blood, weeps for the guilt that costs so much down there.'

Then said the Master: 'Let not thy thoughts be distracted about him henceforth, attend to other things and let him stay there; for I saw him below the bridge point at thee and threaten fiercely with his finger, and I heard him called Geri del Bello.[1] Thou wast then so wholly occupied with him who once held Hautefort that thou didst not look that way till he was gone.'

'O my Leader,' I said 'the violent death which is yet unavenged for him by any that is a partner in his shame made him indignant, and for that reason, as I judge, he went on without speaking to me, and by this he has made me more compassionate with him.'

We talked thus as far as the nearest point which shows the next valley from the ridge, had there been more light, right to the bottom. When we were above the last cloister of Malebolge so that its lay-brothers could be seen by us, strange lamentations assailed me that had their shafts barbed with pity, at which I covered my ears with my hands. As the pain would be if the diseases of the hospitals of Val di Chiana between July and September, and of the Maremma and Sardinia,[2] were all together in one ditch, such was it there, and such stench issued from it as is wont to come from festered limbs. We descended on to the last bank from the long ridge, still keeping to the left, and then my sight was clearer down into the depth, where the handmaid of the Sovereign Lord, unerring justice, punishes the counterfeiters whom she registers here. I do not think the sight of the whole people sick in Aegina was more pitiful, when the air was so full of corruption that all the animals, to the little worm, fell dead, and then, as the poets hold for certain, the ancient tribes were restored again from seed of ants,[3] than was the sight along that dark valley of the spirits languishing in divers heaps. One lay on his belly, one lay on the shoulders of another, and one shifted on all fours along the dismal way.

Step by step we went without speech, watching and listening to the sick, who had not strength to raise themselves. I saw two sitting propped against each other as pan is propped on pan to warm, spotted from head to foot with scabs; and I never saw curry-comb plied by a stable-boy whose master waits for him or by one kept unwillingly awake as each plied on himself continually the bite of his nails for the great fury of the itch that has no other relief, and the nails were scraping off the scabs as the knife does the scales of the bream or other fish that has them larger.

'O thou that dismailest thyself with thy fingers' my Leader began to one of them 'and sometimes makest pincers of them, tell us if there is any Italian among those that are within there, so may thy nails serve thee forever in that employment.'

'We are Italians whom thou seest so disfigured, both of us here,' the one replied weeping 'but who art thou that enquirest of us?'

And the Leader said: 'I am one who descend from level to level with this living man, and my purpose is to show him Hell.'

Then their mutual support was broken and each turned toward me trembling, with others who overheard him.

The good Master drew close to me, saying: 'Tell them what thou wishest.' And, since he wished it, I began: 'So may your memory not pass from the minds of men in the former world but live on under many suns, tell me who you are and of what people; let not your foul and loathsome penalty make you fear to declare yourselves to me.'

'I was of Arezzo,' the one replied 'and Albert of Siena had me put in the fire; but that which I died for does not bring me here. It is true I said to him, speaking in jest, that I knew how to raise myself through the air in flight, and he, being curious and of little wit, would have me show him the art; and only because I did not make him a Daedalus he had me burned by one who held him as a son.[4] But to the last ditch of the ten, for the alchemy I practised in the world, Minos, who may not err, condemned me.'

And I said to the Poet: 'Now was ever a people so light as the Sienese? Not the French, surely, by far.' At which the other leper, who heard what I said, rejoined: 'Except Stricca, pray, who knew how to spend in moderation, and Niccolo, who first devised the costly fashion of the clove in the garden where such seed takes root, and except the company in which Caccia of Asciano squandered the vineyard and the great forest and Blunderer displayed his wit.[5] But, that thou mayst know who thus seconds thee against the Sienese, sharpen thy looks on me so that my face may rightly answer thee, and thou shalt see then that I am the shade of Capocchio,[6] who counterfeited metals by alchemy; and thou must recall, if I make thee out aright, how good an ape I was of nature.'

4. Griffolino of Arezzo played on the credulity of Albert, said to have been the natural son of the Bishop, or the Inquisitor, of Siena, by whom Griffolino was burned as a magician. Daedalus invented human flight (Canto xvii).

5. Probably members of the Spendthrift Club, a notorious group of 12 Sienese youths in Dante's time; cp. Lano in Canto xiii. 'The fashion of the clove', an extravagant use of cloves in cooking which readily 'took root' in Siena.

6. Capocchio was burned alive in Siena for alchemy.

CANTO XXX

Schicchi; Master Adam and Sinon

In the time when Juno was enraged because of Semele against the Theban blood, as she showed once and again, Athamas turned so insane that, seeing his wife go carrying their two children, one in either hand, he cried: 'Let us spread the nets to take the lioness and the whelps as they pass!', then stretched out his pitiless claws, taking the one that was named Learchus, and whirled him round and dashed him on a rock, and she drowned herself with the other burden;[1] and when fortune turned low the loftiness of the Trojans, who dared all, so that the king together with the kingdom was blotted out, Hecuba, sad, forlorn and captive, when she saw Polyxena dead and recognized with anguish her Polydorus on the beach, being out of her wits barked like a dog, so distraught was her mind with grief.[2] But no fury of Thebes or Troy was ever seen so cruel against any, rending beasts and even the limbs of men, as I saw two pallid and naked shades which ran biting like the hog loosed from the sty. The one came at Capocchio and set its fangs in the nape of his neck, then, dragging him, made his belly scrape on the hard bottom.

And the Aretine,[3] who was left trembling, said to me: 'That goblin is Gianni Schicchi, and he goes raging and dealing so with the rest.'

'Oh,' I said to him 'so may the other not fix its teeth on thee, be pleased to tell me who it is before it makes off.'

And he answered me: 'That is the ancient spirit of cursed Myrrha, who became dear to her father with more than lawful love.[4] She contrived to sin with him thus, counterfeiting in herself another's person, as the other who goes off there took it upon him, that he might gain the lady of the stud, to counterfeit in himself Buoso Donati, making the will and giving it due form.'[5]

And when the furious two on whom I had kept my eyes were gone, I turned to look at the other ill-born shades and saw one shaped like a lute, if only he had been cut short at the groin from the part where a man is forked. The heavy dropsy which disproportions the members by ill disposal of the humours so that the face does not answer to the belly made him hold his lips apart, like the hectic who, for thirst, curls the one toward the chin and the other upward.

'O you that are free from all punishment, I know not why, in the grim world,' he said to us 'look and give heed to the misery of Master Adam.[6] Alive, I had in plenty all I wished, and now, alas, I crave one drop of water. The little streams that from the green hills of the Casentino flow down to the Arno, making their channels cool and moist, are always before me, and not in vain, for their image parches me far more than the ill that wastes

my features. The unbending justice which searches me takes occasion from the place where I sinned to make my sighs come faster; there is Romena, where I falsified the currency stamped with the Baptist and for that left above my body burnt. But might I see here the wretched soul of Guido, or of Alessandro, or of their brother,[7] for Fonte Branda I would not give the sight. One is in here already, if the furious shades that go round speak true, but what does it avail me whose limbs are bound? If I were only so light still that I could go an inch in a hundred years I would have set out already on the road seeking him among these misshapen folk, for all it is eleven miles round and a full half-mile across. Through them I am in such a household; they induced me to strike the florins that had three carats of dross.'

And I said to him: 'Who are the two poor wretches that smoke as wet hands do in winter, lying close on thy right boundary?'

'I found them here when I rained into this trough' he replied 'and they have not given a turn since, nor do I think they will to all eternity. The one is the false woman who accused Joseph;[8] the other false Sinon, the Greek from Troy.[9] Burning fever makes them throw off such a reek.'

And one of them, who took it ill, perhaps, to be named so meanly, struck him with his fist on the leathery paunch; it sounded as if it had been a drum. And Master Adam struck him in the face with his arm, which seemed no less hard, saying to him: 'Though I am kept from moving by the weight of my limbs, I have an arm free for such a case.'

To which he replied: 'Going to the fire[10] thou hadst it not so ready; but thou hadst it as ready, and more, when thou wast coining.'

And the dropsied one: 'Thou speakest truth in this; but thou wast not so true a witness at Troy, where truth was wanted from thee.'

'If I spoke falsely,' said Sinon 'thou too didst falsify the coin, and I am here for one fault and thou for more than any other devil.'

'Remember, perjurer, the horse,' replied he of the inflated paunch 'and may it plague thee that all the world knows of it.'

'And be thou plagued with the thirst that cracks thy tongue' said the Greek 'and the foul water that makes that belly such a hedge before thy eyes.'

Then the coiner: 'Thus thy mouth gapes, as usual, to put thee in the wrong, for if I have thirst and humour stuffs me, thou hast burning fever and aching head and wouldst need little persuasion to lap Narcissus' mirror.'[11]

I was all intent on listening to them, when the Master said to me: 'Now keep looking. A little more and I quarrel with thee.'

When I heard him speak to me in anger I turned to him with such shame that still it haunts my memory. Like one that dreams of harm to himself and, dreaming, wishes it a dream, so that he longs for that which is as if it were not, I became such that, unable to speak, I wished to excuse myself and did excuse myself all the while, not thinking that I did.

'Less shame washes away a greater fault than thine has been,' said the Master 'therefore unload thy heart of all sadness and take account that I am always at thy side if it befall again that fortune bring thee where are people in a like dispute; for the desire to hear it is a base desire.'

CANTO XXXI

The Giants; the descent to Cocytus

ONE self-same tongue first stung me so that it dyed both my cheeks, and then it offered me the medicine; so have I heard that the lance of Achilles and his father brought a gift, first of pain, then of healing.[1]

We turned our back on the wretched valley, going up by the enclosing bank and crossing over it without any speech. Here it was less than night and less than day so that my sight went little ahead, but I heard a blast from a horn so loud that it would have made any thunder-clap seem faint, and it directed my eyes, following back on its course, wholly to one place. After the dolorous rout when Charlemagne lost the sacred army Roland did not sound a blast so terrible.[2] I had not long kept my head turned that way when I seemed to see many lofty towers; I said therefore: 'Master, tell me, what city is this?'

And he said to me: 'It is because thou piercest the dark from too far off that thou strayest in thy fancy, and if thou reach the place thou shalt see plainly how much the sense is deceived by distance; push on, therefore, with more speed.' Then he took me kindly by the hand and said: 'Before we go farther, that the fact may seem less strange to

thee, know that they are not towers, but giants, and they are every one in the pit, round its banks, from the navel downward.'

As, when mist thins off, the sight little by little re-shapes that which the vapour hides that loads the air, so, as I pierced the thick and murky atmosphere and came on nearer to the brink, error fled and fear grew in me; for, as on the circle of its walls Montereggione[3] is crowned with towers, so on the bank encompassing the pit towered with half their bulk the horrible giants whom Jove still threatens from Heaven when he thunders,[4] and I began now to distinguish the face of one, the shoulders and the chest and a great part of the belly and down by his sides both arms. Nature, assuredly, when she gave up the art of making creatures like these, did right well to deprive Mars of such executors; and if she does not repent of elephants and whales, one looking at it carefully will hold her the more just and prudent for it, for where the equipment of the mind is joined to evil will and to power men can make no defence against it. His face appeared to me to have the length and bulk of Saint Peter's pine-cone at Rome[6] and the other bones were in proportion, so that the bank, which was an apron to him from the middle down, still showed so much of him above that three Frieslanders[6] would have boasted in vain of reaching his hair; for I saw thirty great spans of him down from the place where a man buckles his cloak.

'Raphel may amech zabi almi,'[7] began the savage mouth to cry, for which no sweeter psalms were

fit; and my Leader towards him: 'Stupid soul, keep to thy horn and vent thyself with that when rage or other passion takes thee. Search at thy neck, bewildered soul, and thou shalt find the strap that holds it tied; see how it lies across thy great chest.' Then he said to me: 'He is his own accuser. This is Nimrod, through whose wicked device the world is not of one sole speech.[8] Let us leave him there and not talk in vain, for every language is to him as his to others, which is known to none.'

We made our way, therefore, farther on, turning left, and found the next a bowshot off, far savager and larger. Whose was the master-hand that bound him I cannot tell, but he had the right arm pinioned behind and the other in front with a chain that held him girt from the neck down, so that on the part of him exposed it was wound to the fifth coil.

'This proud spirit chose to try his strength against supreme Jove,' said my Leader 'and he is thus rewarded. Ephialtes he is called, and he made the great attempt when the giants put the gods in fear.[9] The arms he plied he moves no more.'

And I said to him: 'If it is possible, I would my eyes might have sight of the vast Briareus';[10] to which he replied: 'Thou shalt see Antaeus near here, who speaks and is unfettered,[11] and he will set us down in the lowest depth of guilt. He thou wouldst see is much farther on, and he is bound and fashioned like this one except that he seems fiercer by his looks.'

Never did mighty earthquake shake a tower so violently as Ephialtes shook himself of a sudden;

then more than ever I was in fear of death, nor was need of more than the terror, had I not seen the fetters.

We went farther then and came to Antaeus, who stood full five ells, not reckoning the head, above the rock.

'O thou who, in the fateful valley which made Scipio heir of glory when Hannibal and his men turned their backs,[12] didst once take for prey a thousand lions, and through whom, hadst thou been with thy brothers in the great war, it seems yet to be believed that the sons of earth would have conquered, set us down below, and do not be disdainful of it, where the cold locks up Cocytus. Do not make us go on to Tityus or to Typhon.[13] This man can give of that which is craved for here. Bend down, therefore, and do not curl thy lip; he can yet restore thy fame in the world, for he lives and expects to live long still, if Grace call him not untimely to itself.'

The Master spoke thus, and the other in haste reached forth the hands of which Hercules once felt the mighty grasp and took my Leader; and Virgil, when he felt himself taken, said to me: 'Come close, that I may take thee', then made one bundle of himself and me.

As appears the Carisenda[14] seen from beneath the leaning side when a cloud passes over it against the direction in which it hangs, so did Antaeus appear to me while I watched to see him bend, and it was such a moment that I would fain have gone by another road. But he set us down lightly on the bottom which engulfs Lucifer with Judas, and he did not stay thus bent, but like the mast in a ship rose up.

CANTO XXXII

The Ninth Circle; the Treacherous; Caina; the Treacherous to kindred; Antenora; the Treacherous to country or cause

HAD I the harsh and grating rhymes that would be fitting for the dismal hole on which all the other rocks bear down I would press out more completely the sap of my conception; but since I have not it is not without fear I bring myself to speak, for to describe the bottom of all the universe is no enterprise to undertake in sport or for a tongue that cries *mamma* and *babbo*. But may those ladies aid my verse who aided Amphion to wall in Thebes,[1] so that the telling may not be diverse from the fact. O beyond all others misbegotten crowd who are in the place it is hard to speak of, better had you here been sheep or goats!

When we were down in the dark well, far below the giants' feet, and I was still gazing up at the lofty wall, I heard said to me: 'Look to thy steps; move so that thy feet do not tread on the heads of the wretched weary brothers.' At which I turned and saw before me and under my feet a lake which through frost had the appearance of glass and not of water. Never did Danube in Austria or far-off Don under its frigid sky make in winter so thick

a veil on its course as was here; for had Tambernic fallen on it, or Pietrapana,[2] it would not even at the edge have given a creak. And as the frog sits with its muzzle out of the water to croak when the peasant-girl dreams often of her gleaning, so, livid up to where the flush of shame appears, the suffering shades were in the ice, setting their teeth to the note of the stork.[3] Each kept his face bent down; by the mouth the cold and by the eyes the misery of the heart finds evidence among them.

When I had looked round me for a time I turned to my feet and saw two pressed so close together that they had the hair of their heads intermingled.

'Tell me,' I said 'you that so strain your breasts together, who are you?'

And they bent back their necks; and when they had raised their faces to me their eyes, which before were moist only within, gushed over at the lids, and the frost bound the tears between and locked them up again, never did clamp bind beam on beam so hard; whereupon they butted together like two goats, such fury mastered them

And one who had lost both his ears by the cold said, with his face still down: 'Why dost thou mirror thyself in us so long? If thou wouldst know who are these two, the valley down which the Bisenzio flows was their father Albert's and theirs.[4] They issued from one womb, and all Caina[5] thou mayst search and not find a shade more fit to be set in jelly, not him whose breast and shadow were pierced with a single blow from Arthur's hand,[6] nor Focaccia,[7] nor him here who so obstructs me with his head that I do not see past him and who was called Sassol Mascheroni;[8] if thou art Tuscan

thou knowest well now who he was. And, that thou put me to no further talk, know that I was Camicion de' Pazzi,[9] and I wait for Carlino to exonerate me.'

After that I saw a thousand faces made dog-like with the cold, so that shuddering comes over me, and always will, at frozen pools; and while we were going towards the centre at which all gravity converges and I was shivering in the eternal chill, whether it was will or fate or chance I do not know, but, walking among the heads, I struck my foot hard in the face of one.

Weeping, he shouted at me: 'Why dost thou trample on me? Unless thou comest to add to the revenge for Montaperti,[10] why dost thou molest me?'

And I: 'My Master, now wait for me here, that through him I may be cleared of a doubt; then thou shalt make me hasten as thou wilt.'

The Leader stopped, and I said to him who kept on cursing violently: 'Who art thou, reviling one so?'

'Nay, who art thou' he answered 'that goest through Antenora[11] striking one's cheeks harder than if thou wert alive?'

'I am alive,' was my reply 'and it may be worth much to thee, if thou ask for fame, that I note thy name among the rest.'

And he said to me: 'What I crave for is the opposite. Take thyself hence and do not vex me further, for thou ill knowest how to flatter in this depth.'

Then I took him by the scalp and said: 'Thou must name thyself, or not a hair will be left on thee here.'

At which he said to me: 'Though thou strip me bald I will not tell thee who I am, nor show thee if thou fall upon my head a thousand times.'

I already had his hair twisted in my hand and had torn out more than one tuft of it, he barking

and with his eyes held down, when another cried: 'What ails thee, Bocca? Art thou not satisfied with the music of thy jaws, but thou must bark? What devil is at thee?'

'Now,' said I 'I do not want thee to speak, vile traitor, for in spite of thee I shall carry of thee a true report.'

'Be off,' he answered 'and tell what tale thou wilt; but do not be silent, if thou get out from here, about him that had his tongue so ready just now. Here he laments the Frenchman's silver. "I saw" thou canst say "him of Duera[12] in the place where the sinners are put to cool." If thou art asked who else was there, thou hast beside thee him of Beccheria, whose gullet Florence slit;[13] Gianni de' Soldanier[14] is, I think, farther on, with Ganelon,[15] and with Tribaldello, who opened Faenza while it slept.'[16]

We had already left him when I saw two frozen in one hole so that the one head was a hood to the other, and, as bread is devoured for hunger, the one above set his teeth in the other at the place where the brain joins the nape; Tydeus gnawed the temples of Menalippus for rage[17] just as he was doing with the skull and the other parts.

'O thou who by so bestial a token showest thy hatred against him thou eatest, tell me the cause,' I said 'on this agreement, that if thou hast reason in thy complaint against him I, knowing who you are and what his sin, shall yet requite thee in the world above, if this tongue I talk with be not withered.'

CANTO XXXIII

Ugolino; Ptolomea; the Treacherous to guests; Fra Alberigo

THAT sinner lifted his mouth from the savage meal, wiping it on the hair of the head he had wasted behind, then began: 'Thou wilt have me renew desperate grief which even to think of already wrings my heart before I speak of it; but if my words are to be seed that may bear fruit of infamy to the traitor I gnaw, thou shalt see me speak and weep together. I know not who thou art nor by what means thou hast come down here, but indeed thou seemest to me Florentine when I hear thee. Thou art to know that I was Count Ugolino[1] and this is the Archbishop Ruggieri. I shall tell thee now why I am such a neighbour to him. How by means of his evil devices, confiding in him, I was taken and then killed, there is no need to tell; but what thou canst not have learnt, that is, how cruel was my death, thou shalt hear and shalt know if he has done me wrong.

'A little opening within the mew which because of me has the title of Hunger and in which others are yet to be shut up, had already shown me through its slit several moons, when I had the bad dream which rent for me the veil of the future. This man appeared to me as master and lord hunting the wolf and the whelps on the mountain for which the Pisans cannot see Lucca. With hounds lean,

trained and eager he had sent the Gualandi, the Sismondi and the Lanfranchi to the front before him, and after a short run the father and sons seemed to me spent and with the sharp fangs I seemed to see their flanks torn open. When I awoke before morning I heard my children, who were with me, crying in their sleep and asking for bread. Thou art cruel indeed if thou grieve not now, thinking what my heart foreboded, and, if thou weep not, at what dost thou ever weep?

'They were now awake and the hour approached when our food used to be brought to us, and each was afraid because of his dream, and I heard below the door of the horrible tower nailed up; at which I looked in the faces of my sons without a word. I did not weep, I so turned to stone within. They wept, and my little Anselm said: "Thou lookest so, father, what ails thee?" At that I shed no tears nor answered all that day nor the night after, till another sun came forth on the world. As soon as a little ray made its way into the doleful prison and I discerned in four faces my own look, I bit both hands for grief; and they, thinking I did it from a desire to eat, rose up suddenly and said: "Father, it will be far less pain for us if thou eat of us. Thou didst clothe us with this wretched flesh and do thou strip us of it." I calmed myself then, not to make them more unhappy. That day and the next we stayed all silent.—Ah, hard earth, why didst thou not open?—When we had come to the fourth day Gaddo threw himself outstretched at my feet, saying: "My father, why dost thou not help me?"

There he died, and, as thou seest me, I saw the three drop one by one during the fifth day and the sixth; therefore I gave myself, now blind, to groping over each and for two days called on them after they were dead. Then fasting had more power than grief.'

When he had said this, with eyes askance he took hold of the wretched skull again with his teeth, which were strong on the bone like a dog's.

Ah, Pisa, shame of the peoples of the fair land where sounds the *sì*,[2] since thy neighbours are slow to punish thee may Capraia and Gorgona shift and put a bar on Arno's mouth so that it drown every soul in thee![3] What if Count Ugolino had the name of betraying thy strongholds, thou shouldst not have put his children to such torment. Their youthful years, thou new Thebes,[4] made them innocent, Uguccione and Brigata and the other two named already in my song.

We passed on farther, where the ice roughly swathes another tribe, who were not face downward but all turned up. The very weeping there does not let them weep and the pain which finds a barrier in the eyes turns inward to increase the anguish; for the first tears form a cluster and, like a crystal visor, fill up all the hollow under the brows. And although from the cold all feeling had left my face as in a callus, I seemed now to feel some wind, so that I said: 'My master, who causes this? Is not all heat quenched down here?'[5]

And he said to me: 'Thou shalt soon be where the eye shall give thee the answer, seeing the cause that drives down the blast.'

And one of the wretches of the frozen crust cried to us: 'O souls so cruel that there is given you the last station, lift from my face the hard veils, that I may give vent for a little to the misery that swells my heart, before the tears freeze up again.'

So I said to him: 'If thou wouldst have my help, tell me who thou art, and if I do not relieve thee may I have to go to the bottom of the ice.'

He replied then: 'I am Fra Alberigo; I am he of the fruit of the bad garden, and here I am paid date for fig.'[6]

'Oh,' I said to him, 'then art thou dead already?'

And he to me: 'How my body fares in the world above I have no knowledge. This Ptolomea[7] is so privileged that many a time the soul falls down here before Atropos[8] sends it forth; and that thou mayst more willingly clear the glazing of tears from my face, know that as soon as the soul betrays as I did, its body is taken from it by a devil, who controls it henceforth till its full time comes round. The soul falls headlong into this tank here, and perhaps the body still appears above of the shade that is wintering here behind me; thou must know, if thou art just come down. He is Ser Branca d'Oria[9] and many years have passed since he was thus enclosed.

'I believe thou art deceiving me,' I said to him 'for Branca d'Oria never died, but eats and drinks and sleeps and puts on clothes.'

'In the ditch above of the Malebranche,' he said 'where the sticky pitch boils, Michael Zanche had not yet arrived when this man left a devil instead of himself in his body, as did a near kinsman of his who wrought the treachery along with him.

But now reach out thy hand here; open my eyes.' And I did not open them for him; and it was courtesy to be a churl to him.

Ah, Genoese, people strange to all good custom and full of all corruption, why are you not driven from the world? For with the worst spirit of Romagna I found one of you such that for his deeds he is in soul already bathed in Cocytus and in body appears still living above.

6. A Jovial Friar (Canto xxiii), of the ruling Guelf family of Faenza. Resenting an injury from his younger brother, he invited him and his son to a banquet and gave signal for their murder in the words, 'Bring the fruit', from which 'the bad fruits of Fra Alberigo' were proverbial. To get date for fig meant, proverbially, to get more than one bargained for.

7. From Ptolemy, Captain of Jericho, who murdered his father-in-law Simon Maccabeus, High Priest, at a banquet, along with his sons; Ptolomea is the third zone of Cocytus, where treachery to guests is punished.

8. Third of the Fates; she determines the time of death.

9. Branca, of the famous Ghibelline family of the d'Oria in Genoa, murdered his father-in-law Zanche (Canto xxii) at a banquet in 1290.

CANTO XXXIV

Judecca; the Treacherous to lords and benefactors; Satan; the departure from Hell

'*Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*[1] towards us,' my Master said; 'look forward, therefore, if thou discern him.'

As when a thick fog rises or night falls on our hemisphere appears in the distance a windmill turning with the wind, I seemed to see a structure of the kind; then, for the wind, I drew back behind my Leader, for there was no other shelter there. I was already—and with fear I set it down in verse—where the shades were wholly covered and showed through like straws in glass; some were lying, some erect, this with the head, that with the soles uppermost, another like a bow, bent face to feet.

When we had gone on so far that my Master thought it good to show me the creature who was once so fair,[2] he took himself from before me and made me stop, saying: 'Lo Dis, and the place where thou must arm thee with fortitude.'

How chilled and faint I turned then, do not ask, reader, for I do not write it, since all words would fail. I did not die and I did not remain alive; think now for thyself, if thou hast any wit, what I became, denied both death and life. The Emperor of the woeful kingdom stood forth at mid-breast from the ice, and I compare better with a giant than giants

with his arms; see now what that whole must be to answer to such a part. If he was as fair as he is now foul and lifted up his brows against his Maker, well may all sorrow come from him. Ah, how great a marvel it seemed to me when I saw three faces on his head; one in front, and that was red, the two others joined to it just over the middle of each shoulder and all joined at the crown. The right seemed between white and yellow; the left had such an aspect as the people from where the Nile descends. Under each came forth two great wings of size fitting for such a bird, sails at sea I never saw like these; they had no feathers but were like a bat's, and he was beating them so that three winds went forth from him by which all Cocytus was kept frozen. With six eyes he was weeping and over three chins dripped tears and bloody foam. In each mouth he crushed a sinner with his teeth as with a heckle and thus he kept three of them in pain; to him in front the biting was nothing to the clawing, for sometimes the back was left all stripped of skin.

'That soul up there which has the greatest punishment' said the Master 'is Judas Iscariot, who has his head inside and plies his legs without. Of the other two who have their heads below, the one that hangs from the black muzzle is Brutus—see how he writhes and utters not a word—and the other Cassius, who looks so stalwart. But night is rising again and now it is time to go, for we have seen all.'

At his bidding I clasped him round the neck; and he watched his chance of time and place and, when the wings were wide open, caught hold of the shaggy flanks, then descended from tuft to tuft between the matted hair and the frozen crusts. When we were where the thigh turns, just on the swelling of the haunch, the Leader with labour and strain brought round his head where his legs had been and grappled on the hair like one climbling, so that I thought we were returning into Hell again.

'Hold fast,' said the Master, panting like one spent, 'for by such stairs must we go forth from so much evil.'

And he passed out through the cleft of a rock and put me on the edge to sit, then reached toward me his cautious step. I raised my eyes and thought to see Lucifer as I had left him, and I saw his legs held upward; and if I became perplexed then let the dull crowd judge who do not see what is the point that I had passed.[3]

'Rise up on thy feet,' said the Master; 'the way is long and the road is hard and already the sun returns to middle tierce.'[4]

It was no palace hall where we were, but a natural dungeon, ill-floored and scant of light.

'Before I extricate myself from the abyss, my Master,' I said when I had risen 'to clear me from perplexity speak to me a little. Where is the ice? And he there, how is he fixed thus upside-down? And how, in so short a time, has the sun made the passage from evening to morning?'

And he said to me: 'Thou imaginest thou art still on the other side of the centre, where I took hold of the hair of the guilty worm that pierces

the world. Thou wast on that side so long as I descended; when I turned myself thou didst pass the point to which weights are drawn from every part and art now come beneath the hemisphere opposite to that which covers the great dry land and under whose zenith the Man was done to death who was born and lived without sin.[5] Thou hast thy feet upon a little sphere which forms the other face of Judecca; here it is morning when it is evening there, and he that made a ladder for us with his hair is still fixed as he was before. On this side he fell down from Heaven, and the land which before stood out here made a veil of the sea for fear of him and came to our hemisphere; and perhaps to escape from him that which appears on this side left here the empty space and rushed upwards.'[6]

Down there is a place at the farthest part of his tomb from Beelzebub, which is known, not by sight, but by the sound of a stream that descends there through the hollow of a rock which it has worn in its winding course and gentle slope. The Leader and I entered on that hidden road to return into the bright world, and without caring to have any rest we climbed up, he first and I second, so far that I saw through a round opening some of the fair things that Heaven bears; and thence we came forth to see again the stars.

5. They are now under the southern celestial hemisphere, opposite to that over the terrestrial hemisphere of 'dry land' (*Gen.* i. 9), at the centre of which is Jerusalem (*Ezek.* v. 5), and their time has gone back to that of the antipodes, Holy Saturday morning.

6. The former land of the southern hemisphere fled to the northern, leaving the southern all sea, and the material which once filled the 'natural dungeon', Satan's 'tomb', where they are, rushed up where Satan had plunged down and formed the island-mountain of Purgatory in the southern hemisphere.

BOOK II
PURGATORY
CANTO I

Morning; Venus; the four stars; Cato; the rush and the dew

To course over better waters the little bark of my wit now lifts her sails, leaving behind her so cruel a sea, and I will sing of that second kingdom where the human spirit is purged and becomes fit to ascend to Heaven. But here let poetry rise again from the dead, O holy Muses, since I am yours; and here let Calliope rise up for a while and accompany my song with that strain which smote the ears of the wretched pies so that they despaired of pardon![1]

The sweet hue of the oriental sapphire which was gathering in the serene face of the heavens from the clear zenith to the first circle[2] gladdened my eyes again as soon as I passed out of the dead air which had afflicted my eyes and breast. The fair planet that prompts to love made all the east laugh, veiling the Fishes which were in her train.[3] I turned to the right and set my mind on the other pole, and I saw four stars never seen before but by the first people; the sky seemed to rejoice in their flames. O widowed region of the north, since thou art denied that sight![4]

When I had withdrawn my gaze from them, turning a little towards the other pole where the Wain had already disappeared, I saw beside me an old man alone, worthy by his looks of so great reverence that no son owes more to a father;[5] his beard was long and streaked with white, and his hair the same, a double tress falling on his breast; the rays of the four holy stars so adorned his face with light that I saw him as if the sun were before him.

'Who are ye that have fled the eternal prison against the blind stream?' he said, shaking those venerable locks. 'Who has guided you or who was your lantern in coming forth from the profound night that holds in perpetual blackness the valley of Hell? Are the laws of the abyss thus broken, or has a new decree been made in Heaven, that, being damned, you come to my cliffs?'

My Leader then laid hold of me and with speech and hand and sign made me reverent in knees and brow, then answered him: 'Of myself I came not. A lady descended from Heaven for whose prayers I succoured this man with my companionship; but since it is thy will to have it made more plain how in truth it stands with us, it cannot be mine to deny thee. This man never saw his last hour, but by his folly was so near to it that little time was left to run. I was sent to him, as I said, for his deliverance and there was no other way but this on which I have set out; I have shown him all the guilty race and now purpose to show him those spirits that cleanse themselves under thy charge.

How I have led him would be long to tell thee; there descends from above virtue which aids me in bringing him to see thee and to hear thee. May it please thee to be gracious to his coming. He goes seeking liberty, which is so dear, as he knows who gives his life for it; thou knowest it, since death for it was not bitter to thee in Utica, where thou didst leave the vesture which in the great day will be so bright.[6] The eternal edicts are not broken for us, for this man lives and Minos does not bind me; but I am of the circle where are the chaste eyes of thy Marcia, who in her looks still prays thee, O holy breast, that thou hold her for thine own.[7] For her love, then, do thou incline to us; allow us to go through thy seven kingdoms. I will report to her thy kindness, if thou deign to be spoken of there below.'

'Marcia so pleased my eyes while I was yonder' he said then 'that whatever kindness she sought of me I did; now that she dwells beyond the evil stream[8] she cannot move me more, by the law which was made when I came forth from thence. But if a lady from Heaven moves and directs thee, as thou sayest, there is no need of fair words; let it suffice thee to ask me for her sake. Go then, and see that thou gird him with a smooth rush and bathe his face so as to remove from it all defilement, for it would not be fitting to go with eye dimmed by any fog before the first minister of those of Paradise. This little island, round about its very base, down there where the wave beats on it, bears rushes on the soft mud; no other plant which would make leaves or harden can live there,

not yielding to the buffets. Afterwards let not your return be this way; the sun, which is now rising, will show you where to take the mountain at an easier ascent.'

With that he vanished, and I rose up without speaking and drew close to my Leader and set my eyes on him.

He began: 'Follow my steps; let us turn back, for this plain slopes down from here to its low bounds.'

The dawn was overcoming the morning breeze, which fled before it, so that I descried far off the trembling of the sea. We made our way over the lonely plain, like one who returns to the road he has lost and, till he finds it, seems to himself to go in vain. When we were at a part where the dew resists the sun and, being in shade, is little dispersed, my Master gently laid both hands outspread on the grass. I, therefore, aware of his purpose, reached toward him my tear-stained cheeks and on them he wholly restored that colour which Hell had hidden in me. We came then on to the desert shore that never saw man sail its waters who after had experience of return. There he girded me as the other had bidden. O marvel! for as was the lowly plant he chose such did it spring up again immediately in the place where he had plucked it.

CANTO II

The ship of souls; the angel pilot; Casella's song; Cato's rebuke

ALREADY the sun had reached the horizon whose meridian circle covers Jerusalem with its highest point, and night, circling opposite to it, was issuing from the Ganges with the Scales, which fall from her hand when she exceeds the day, so that, there where I was, the white and rosy cheeks of fair Aurora, with her increasing age, were turning orange.[1] We were still beside the sea, like those that ponder on their road, who go on in heart and in body linger; and lo, as on the approach of morning Mars glows ruddy through the thick vapours low in the west over the ocean floor, so appeared to me—may I see it again!—a light coming so swiftly over the sea that no flight could match its speed; from which when I had taken my eyes for a moment to question my Leader I saw it again, grown brighter and larger. Then on either side of it appeared to me a whiteness, I knew not what, and below it, little by little, another came forth. Still my Master did not say a word till the first whitenesses appeared as wings; then, when he clearly discerned the pilot, he cried: 'Bend, bend

thy knees, behold the angel of God, clasp thy hands; such ministers shalt thou see henceforth. See how he scorns human instruments and seeks no oar nor other sail than his wings between shores so distant; see how he has them raised toward the sky, fanning the air with the eternal pinions which do not change like mortal plumage.'

Then, as the divine bird came towards us more and more, he appeared brighter, so that my eyes could not bear him close and I cast them down, and he came on to the shore with a vessel so swift and light that the water took in nothing of it. On the poop stood the heavenly steersman, such that blessedness seemed written upon him, and more than a thousand spirits sat within. *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*[2] they sang all together with one voice, with all that is written after of that psalm; then he made over them the sign of Holy Cross, at which they all flung themselves on the beach, and he went swiftly as he came.

The crowd that remained there seemed strange to the place, gazing about like those that make trial of things new. On all sides the sun was shooting forth the day and with his keen arrows had chased Capricorn from mid-heaven,[3] when the new people raised their faces toward us, saying to us: 'If you know, show us the way to go to the mountain.'

And Virgil answered: 'You think, perhaps, we are acquainted with this place, but we are strangers like yourselves; we came but now, a little while before you, by another road which was so rough and hard that now the climb will seem to us a pastime.'

The souls, who had perceived from my breathing that I was still in life, turned pale with wonder, and as to a messenger who bears an olive-branch[4] the people crowd to hear the news and no one heeds the crush, so every one of these fortunate souls fixed his eyes on my face, as if forgetting to go and make them fair. I saw one of them come forward with so much affection to embrace me that it moved me to do the same. O empty shades, except in semblance! Three times I clasped my hands behind him and as often brought them back to my breast. Wonder, I think, was painted in my looks, at which the shade smiled and drew back and I, following him, pressed forward. Gently he bade me stand; then I knew who it was and begged him that he would stay a little and talk with me.

He answered me: 'Even as I loved thee in my mortal flesh, so do I love thee freed; therefore I stay. But thou, why art thou on this journey?'

'My Casella,[5] to return another time where I am I take this road; but from thee how has so much time been taken?'

And he said to me: 'No wrong is done me if he who takes up whom and when he will has many times denied me this passage, for of a righteous will his own is framed; nevertheless, for three months he has taken with all peace whoever would embark.[6] I, therefore, who had now turned to the shore where Tiber's waters become salt, was kindly gathered in by him. To that river-mouth he has now set his wing, for there the souls are always gathering that sink not down to Acheron.'

And I: 'If a new law does not take from thee memory or practice of the songs of love which used to quiet all my longings, may it please thee to refresh my soul with them for a while, which is so spent coming here with my body.'

Love that discourses to me in my mind[7] he began then, so sweetly that the sweetness sounds within me still. My Master and I and these people who were with him seemed as content as if nothing else touched the mind of any. We were all rapt and attentive to his notes, when lo, the venerable old man, crying: 'What is this, laggard spirits? What negligence, what delay is this? Haste to the mountain to strip you of the slough that allows not God to be manifest to you.'

As when doves collected at their feeding, picking up wheat or tares, quiet, without their usual show of pride, if something appears that frightens them suddenly leave their food lying, because they are assailed with a greater care; so I saw that new troop leave the song and go towards the slope, like those who go they know not where; nor was our departure in less haste.

CANTO III

Dante's shadow; the Contumacious; Manfred

WHILE the sudden flight scattered them through the plain, turned to the mountain where reason searches us, I drew close to my faithful comrade. And how should I have sped without him? Who would have brought me up the mountain? He seemed to me smitten with self-reproach. O pure and noble conscience, how bitter a sting to thee is a little fault!

When his feet ceased from the haste that mars the dignity of every action, my mind, till then restrained, took in its eagerness a wider range and I set my face to the hill that rises highest heavenward from the sea. The sun, which was flaming red behind, was broken before me in the shape it made by its rays resting on me. I turned to my side, fearing that I was abandoned when I saw the ground darkened before me only; and my comfort, turning quite round, began to speak to me: 'Why art thou still distrustful? Believest thou not that I am with thee and guide thee? It is evening now in the place where the body is buried within which I cast a shadow; Naples holds it and it was taken from Brindisi.[1] If there is now no shadow before me do not marvel more than at the heavens, that one does not obstruct a ray from another.[2] The

Power fits such bodies as these to suffer torments of heat and frost which wills not that the way of its working should be revealed to us. Foolish is he who hopes that our reason can trace the infinite ways taken by one Substance in three Persons. Rest content, race of men, with the *quia*;[3] for if you had been able to see all there was no need for Mary to give birth, and you have seen the fruitless desire of men such that their desire would have been set at rest which is given them for an eternal grief—I speak of Aristotle and of Plato and of many others.' And here he bent down his brow and said no more and remained disquieted.

We came meanwhile to the foot of the mountain. There we found the cliff so steep that the nimblest legs would have been useless on it; the wildest and most broken scree between Lerici and Turbia,[4] compared with it, is an easy and open stairway.

'Now who knows on which hand the hill slopes,' said my Master, staying his steps, 'so that one going without wings may climb?'

And while he held his face down and pondered in his mind on the way and I was gazing up round the rock, there appeared to me on the left a company of souls who were moving their steps towards us and not seeming to approach, they came so slowly.

'Lift thine eyes, Master,' I said 'see there those who will give us counsel, if thou canst not find it in thyself.'

He looked then and with an air of relief replied: 'Let us go that way, for they come slowly, and thou, dear son, be steadfast in thy hope.'

These people were still at a distance—I mean after we had gone a thousand paces—as far as a

good slinger's hand would carry, when they all pressed up to the solid walls of the lofty bank and stood still and close together, as men stop to look who are in doubt.

'O ye who have made a good end, spirits already elect,' Virgil began 'by that peace which, I believe, awaits you all, tell us where the mountain slopes so that it is possible to go up; for loss of time most grieves him that knows best.'

As the sheep come forth from the fold by one and two and three and the rest stand timid, bending eyes and muzzle to the ground, and what the first does the rest do, pressing up behind it if it stops, simple and quiet, and do not know why; so I saw start then to come forward the leaders of that fortunate flock, modest in looks and dignified in bearing. As soon as those in front saw the light broken on the ground on my right side so that the shadow lay from me to the cliff they stopped and drew back a space, and all the rest that came behind, not knowing why, did the same.

'Without your asking I declare to you that this is a human body you see, by which the sun's light is divided on the ground. Do not marvel, but believe that not without power which comes from Heaven he seeks to scale this wall.' Thus the Master; and that well-deserving company said: 'Turn back then and go on before us', signalling to us with the back of their hands.

And one of them began: 'Whoever thou art, turn thy face as thou goest; consider if ever thou hast seen me yonder.'

I turned to him and looked at him attentively. He was fair-haired and beautiful and of noble

presence, but a blow had cloven one of his eyebrows. When I had humbly disclaimed ever to have seen him, 'Look now!' he said, and showed me a wound high on his breast; then said, smiling: 'I am Manfred, grandson of the Empress Constance.[5] Therefore I beg of thee that when thou returnest thou go to my fair daughter, mother of the pride of Sicily and of Aragon,[6] and tell her the truth if another tale is told. After I had my body cleft by two mortal strokes I gave myself up with tears to Him who freely pardons; horrible were my sins, but the infinite goodness has arms so wide that it receives whoever turns to it. If Cosenza's pastor, who was sent then by Clement to hunt me down, had rightly read that page in God,[7] my body's bones would still be at the bridge-head by Benevento beneath the shelter of the heavy cairn. Now the rain washes them and the wind drives them, beyond the Kingdom, near Verde's banks, where he carried them with lights extinguished. By their curse none is so lost that the eternal love cannot return while hope keeps any of it green. It is true that one who dies in contumacy of Holy Church, even if he repent at the last, must stay thirty years on this bank outside for every year he has spent in his presumption, if that sentence is not made shorter by holy prayers. See now if thou canst gladden me by making known to my good Constance how thou hast seen me, as well as this exclusion; for much is gained here through those yonder.'

CANTO IV

The ascent; the sun's course; Belacqua; the Lethargic

WHEN by pleasures or pains which one of our faculties receives the soul concentrates wholly on that, it seems to give heed to no other of its powers, and this is contrary to the error which maintains that one soul is kindled above another in us;[1] and therefore when a thing is heard or seen that keeps the soul strongly bent on it the time passes and one is not aware, for the faculty that listens for it is one and that which holds the entire soul another, this as it were bound, the other free.[2] Of this I had actual experience, hearing that spirit and marvelling, for the sun had climbed full fifty degrees[3] and I had not noted it, when we came to where these souls cried to us all together: 'Here is what you want.'

A larger opening many a time the peasant hedges up with a forkful of his thorns when the grapes are darkening than was the passage by which my Leader, and I after him, climbed by ourselves when the troop parted from us. One goes to San Leo and one descends to Noli and mounts to the summit of Bismantova with feet alone, but here there was need to fly—with the swift wings and plumage, I mean, of great desire, following that guidance which gave me hope and made light for me. We

climbed within the cloven rock, and the surface on each side pressed close on us and the ground beneath required both hands and feet.

When we were at the upper edge of the high bank, on the open hillside, 'My Master,' I said 'which way shall we take?'

And he said to me: 'Do not fall back a step; still make thy way up the mountain behind me till some wise guide appear for us.'

The summit was so high that it went beyond sight and the slope was far steeper than the line from mid-quadrant to centre. I was weary when I began: 'O sweet father, turn and see how I am left alone unless thou stay.'

'My son,' he said 'drag thyself up as far as there', pointing me to a level a little above, which went all round the hill on that side. His words so spurred me that I forced myself, clambering after him, till the ledge was beneath my feet. There we both sat down, facing the east whence we had climbed, for often it helps us to look that way.[4] First I bent my eyes on the shores below, then lifted them to the sun and marvelled that we were struck by it on the left.[5]

The Poet noted well that I was all amazed at the chariot of the light where it was passing between us and the north, so that he said to me: 'If Castor and Pollux were in company with that mirror which brings its light upwards and downwards thou shouldst see the glowing zodiac wheel still closer to the Bears, unless it left its ancient track.[6] If thou wouldst conceive how this may be, concentrate thy mind and picture Sion and this mountain so placed on the earth that they have one horizon

in common and different hemispheres; then thou shalt see how the highway on which Phaeton, to his hurt, failed to drive must needs pass this mountain on the one side and that on the other, if thou give thy mind to it carefully.'[7]

'Truly, my Master,' I said 'never did I see so clearly as I now discern, where my wit seemed lacking, that the mid-circle of the celestial motion, which in a certain science is called the Equator and which lies always between the sun and winter, is, for the reason thou namest, as far northward from here as the Hebrews saw it toward the torrid parts.[8] But, if it please thee, I would fain learn how far we have to go, for the hill rises farther than my eyes can climb.'

And he said to me: 'This mountain is such that it is always hard at the start below and the higher one goes it is less toilsome; therefore when it will seem to thee so pleasant that going up will be as easy for thee as going downstream in a boat, then thou shalt be at the end of this path; there look to rest thy weariness. I have no more to answer, and this I know for truth.'

And as soon as he had spoken these words a voice sounded close by: 'Perhaps before that thou wilt have need of a seat.'

At the sound of it both of us turned round, and we saw on our left a great boulder which neither he nor I had noticed before. We went over to it, and there were people there resting in the shade behind the rock as men settle to rest through indolence, and one of them, who seemed to me weary, sat clasping his knees and holding his face low down between them.

'O my dear Lord,' I said 'cast thine eye on him there who shows himself more indolent than if sloth were his sister.'

Then he turned and took note of us, just moving his face over his thigh, and said: 'Go thou up then who art sturdy.'

I knew then who it was, and the fatigue which still quickened my breath a little did not hinder my going to him; and when I reached him he scarcely raised his head, saying: 'Hast thou quite made out how the sun drives his car past thy left shoulder?'

His lazy movements and curt speech moved my lips a little to a smile, then I began: 'Belacqua,[9] I am not grieved for thee henceforth. But tell me, why art thou seated here? Dost thou wait for escort, or hast thou only resumed the old ways?'

And he said: 'O brother, what is the use of going up, for God's angel that sits in the gateway would not let me pass to the torments?[10] The heavens must first wheel about me, waiting outside, as long as in my lifetime, because I put off good sighs to the last, unless prayer first helps me which rises from a heart that lives in grace. What avails the other that is not heard in Heaven?'

And now the Poet was climbing before me and saying: 'Come now; see, the meridian is touched by the sun and already on the shore night sets its foot on Morocco.'[11]

CANTO V

The Penitents of the last hour; Jacopo del Cassero; Buonconte da Montefeltro; La Pia

I HAD already parted from those shades and was following in the steps of my Leader when one behind me, pointing his finger, cried: 'See, the rays do not seem to shine on the left of him below[1] and he seems to bear himself like one alive.'

I turned my eyes at the sound of these words and saw that they kept looking in amazement at me and at the light that was broken.

'Why is thy mind so entangled' said the Master 'that thou slackenest thy pace? What is it to thee what they whisper there? Come after me and let the people talk. Stand like a firm tower that never shakes its top for blast of wind; for always the man in whom thought springs up over thought sets his mark farther off, for the one thought saps the force of the other.'

What could I answer but 'I come'? I said it, suffused somewhat with the colour that sometimes makes a man deserving of pardon.

And meanwhile people were coming across the slope a little in front of us, singing the *Miserere* line by line.[2] When they perceived that I did not give passage to the rays through my body they changed their song to an 'Oh!' long-drawn and hoarse, and two of them as messengers ran to meet us and asked us: 'Let us know of your condition.'

And my Master said: 'You may go back and report to those who sent you that this man's body is true flesh; if they stopped for seeing his shadow, as I suppose, they have sufficient answer. Let them do him honour and it may profit them.'

Never saw I kindled vapours cleave the clear sky at nightfall or sunset clouds in August[3] so swiftly as these returned above and, when they reached the rest, wheeled back with them to us like a troop running with loose rein.

'These people that press on us are many and they come to petition thee,' said the Poet 'but go right on and listen as thou goest.'

'O soul that goest for thy bliss with those members with which thou wast born,' they came crying 'stay thy steps for a little; look if thou hast ever seen any of us, that thou mayst carry news of him yonder. Ah, why dost thou go on? Why dost thou not stop? We were all slain some time by violence and were sinners up to the last hour. Then light from Heaven gave us understanding, so that, repenting and forgiving, we came forth from life at peace with God, who with desire to see Him pierces our heart.'

And I replied: 'However I gaze in your faces I do not recognize any; but if in anything I can please you, spirits born for bliss, by that peace which makes me seek it from world to world in the steps of such a guide, I will do it.'

And one began: 'Each of us trusts in thy good offices without thine oath, provided lack of power do not thwart the will; therefore, speaking alone before the rest, I beg of thee, if ever thou see the land that lies between Romagna and that of Charles,

that thou do me the courtesy to beg them in Fano that good prayers be made for me, only that I may purge away my grievous sins.[4] From thence I sprang, but the deep wounds from which poured the blood in which I had my life were given me in the midst of the sons of Antenor, where I thought to be most secure. He of Este had it done, who was incensed against me far more than justice warranted; but had I made my flight towards La Mira when I was overtaken at Oriaco I should still be yonder where men breathe. I ran to the marsh, and the reeds and the mire so entangled me that I fell, and there I saw form on the ground a pool from my veins.'

Then another spoke: 'Pray, so may that desire be satisfied which draws thee to the high mountain, do thou with gracious pity help mine. I was of Montefeltro; I am Buonconte.[5] Neither Giovanna nor any other has care for me, so that I go among these with downcast brow.'

And I said to him: 'What force or what chance took thee so far from Campaldino that thy burial-place was never known?'

'Ah,' he replied 'at the foot of the Casentino a stream crosses called the Archiano which rises above the Hermitage in the Apennines. To the place where its name is lost I came, wounded in the throat, flying on foot, and bloodying the plain. There I lost sight and speech. I ended on the name of Mary and there fell and only my flesh remained. I will tell the truth and do thou tell it again among the living. God's angel took me, and he from Hell cried: "O thou from Heaven, why dost thou rob me? Thou carriest off with thee this man's eternal part for a little tear that takes him from me. But with the other I will deal in other fashion."

'Thou knowest well how there gathers in the air the moist vapour which changes to water again as soon as it rises where the cold condenses it. That evil will which seeks only evil he joined with intellect and by the power his nature gave he stirred the mists and the winds;[6] then, when day was spent, he covered the valley from Pratomagno to the great range with cloud and so charged the sky overhead that the pregnant air was turned to water. The rain fell and that which the ground refused came to the gullies and gathering in great torrents poured headlong to the royal river[7] with such speed that nothing stayed its course. The raging Archiano found my frozen body near its mouth and swept it into the Arno and loosed on my breast the cross I made of myself when pain overcame me. It rolled me along the banks and over the bottom, then covered and swathed me with its spoils.'

'Pray, when thou hast returned to the world and art rested from the long way,' the third spirit followed on the second 'do thou remember me, who am La Pia.[8] Siena gave me birth, Maremma death. He knows of it who, first plighting troth, wedded me with his gem.'

CANTO VI

The power of intercession; Sordello; the disorders of Italy and Florence

WHEN the game of hazard breaks up the loser is left disconsolate, going over his throws again, and sadly learns his lesson; with the other all the people go off; one goes in front, one seizes him from behind, another at his side recalls himself to his memory; he does not stop, but listens to this one and that one; each to whom he reaches his hand presses on him no longer and so he saves himself from the throng. Such was I in that dense crowd, turning my face to them this way and that, and by promising I got free from them. There was the Aretine who met his death at the fierce hands of Ghino di Tacco, and the other who was drowned flying in the rout; there Federico Novello was beseeching with outstretched hands, and he of Pisa who made the good Marzucco show his fortitude. I saw Count Orso, and the soul severed from its body through spite and envy, so it said, and not for crime committed—Pierre de la Brosse, I mean; and let the Lady of Brabant look to it, while she is here, that she be not of a worse flock for this.[1]

As soon as I was free of all those shades, whose one prayer was that others pray so that they might come sooner to their holiness, I began: 'It seems to me, O my light, that thou deniest expressly in one passage that prayer bends the decree of heaven,[2]

and for this alone these people pray. Will their hope, then, be vain, or are thy words not rightly clear to me?'

And he said to me: 'My writing is plain and the hope of these souls is not mistaken, if thou consider well with sound judgement; for the height of justice is not lowered because the fire of love fulfils in a moment the satisfaction due from each who sojourns here, and in the place where I set down that point defect was not made good by prayer because the prayer had no access to God. Nevertheless, in so deep a question do not take thy stand unless she tell thee of it who shall be light between the truth and the intellect,—I know not if thou understandest, I speak of Beatrice; thou shalt see her above on the summit of this mountain, smiling and in bliss.'

And I said: 'My Lord, let us make more haste, for now I do not weary as before, and see how the hill now casts its shadow.'

'We will go forward with this day's light' he replied 'as much farther as now we may, but the fact is quite other than thou thinkest; before thou art there above thou shalt see him return that is now hidden by the slope so that thou dost not break his beams. But see there a soul seated by himself apart who is looking towards us; he will point out to us the speediest way.'

We came to him. O Lombard soul, how lofty and disdainful was thy bearing and what dignity in the slow moving of thine eyes! He said nothing to us and was letting us pass, only watching us like a couching lion; but Virgil went up to him, asking him to show us the best ascent, and he did not

reply to his question but enquired of our country and condition. And the gentle Leader began: 'Mantua—'; and the shade, who had been all rapt within himself, sprang towards him from the place where he was, saying: 'O Mantuan, I am Sordello of thy city.'[3] And the one embraced the other.

Ah, Italy enslaved, hostel of misery, ship without pilot in great tempest, no princess among the provinces but a brothel! So eager was that noble soul, only for the dear name of his city, to give welcome there to its citizen, and now in thee thy living are never free from war and of those whom one wall and moat shut in one gnaws at the other. Search, wretched one, round the shores of thy seas, then look within thy bosom, if any part of thee rejoice in peace. What avails that Justinian refitted the reins on thee if the saddle is empty?[4] Without that the shame were less.

Ah, ye that should be devout[5] and let Caesar sit in the saddle if you gave good heed to God's direction to you, see how this beast has turned vicious for lack of correction by the spurs since you laid hold of the bridle.

O German Albert,[6] who abandonest her that is become untamed and savage and shouldst bestride her saddle-bow, just judgement from the stars fall upon thy blood and be it so strange and manifest that thy successor may have fear of it! For thou and thy father, held back yonder by greed, have suffered the garden of the Empire to be desolate. Come and see Montagues and Capulets, Monaldi and Filippeschi,[7] those already wretched and these in dread, thou that hast no care. Come, pitiless,

come and see the distress of thy nobles and heal their hurts, and thou shalt see how safe is Santafiora.[8] Come and see thy Rome, that weeps, widowed and solitary, and cries night and day: 'Caesar, my Lord, why dost thou deny me thy companionship?' Come and see thy people, how they love one another, and, if no pity for us move thee, come for shame of thy repute.

And if it be lawful for me, O Jove[9] supreme who wast crucified on earth for us, are Thy just eyes turned elsewhere, or is it preparation Thou makest in the abyss of Thy counsel for some good quite cut off from our perception? For all the cities of Italy are full of tyrants and every clown that plays the partisan becomes a Marcellus.[10]

My Florence, thou mayst well be at ease with this digression, which does not touch thee, thanks to thy people who are so resourceful. Many have justice at heart, and the arrow is slow to be loosed, for it does not come without consideration to the bow; but thy people have it on the tip of the tongue. Many refuse the common burden; but thy people are eager with their answer without being asked, and cry: 'I take it on.' Count thyself happy then for thou hast good cause, being rich and at peace and wise! If I speak truth the facts do not hide it. Athens and Sparta, which made the ancient laws and were so well ordered, gave little hint of right living beside thee, who makest provisions so fine that the threads thou spinnest in October do not last to mid-November. How many times within thy memory hast thou changed laws, money, offices, customs, and renewed thy members![11] And if thou

rightly recall thyself to thy sight, thou wilt see thyself like the sick woman that can find no rest on her bed of down but with turning seeks to ease her pain.

CANTO VII

The greetings of Virgil and Sordello; the Valley of the Princes

AFTER the dignified and joyful greetings had been repeated a third and a fourth time Sordello drew back and said: 'But who are you?'

'Before the souls worthy to ascend to God had turned to this mountain my bones were buried by Octavian;[1] I am Virgil, and for no other fault I lost Heaven but lack of faith.' Thus then replied my Leader.

Like one that sees before him of a sudden a thing he marvels at, who believes and believes not, saying: 'It is, it is not,' such seemed the other; then bent his head and humbly approached him again and embraced him, clasping where the inferior does. 'O glory of the Latins,' he said 'through whom our tongue showed forth its power, O eternal honour of the place from which I come, what deserving or what favour shows thee to me? If I am worthy to hear thy words, tell me if thou comest from Hell, and from what cloister.'

'Through all the circles of the woeful kingdom' he answered him 'I have come hither. Power from Heaven moved me and by its help I come. Not for doing, but for not doing, I have lost the sight of the Sun above for which thou longest and which was known by me too late.[2] There is a place below, sad not with torments but only with darkness, where the laments have no sound of wailing but

are sighs; there I abide with the little innocents seized by the fangs of death before they were cleared of human guilt,[3] there I abide with those who were not clothed with the three holy virtues but without sin knew the others and followed them every one.[4] But if thou knowest and canst, give us some direction by which we may come more quickly where the true Purgatory begins.'

He answered: 'No fixed place is set for us. I am allowed to go up and round, and as far as I may I shall accompany thee as guide. But see now how the day declines and to go up by night is not possible, so it is well to think of a good resting-place. There are souls on the right here apart; if thou permit me I shall bring thee to them and not without delight they will be known to thee.'

'How is that?' he replied 'he that should wish to climb by night, would he be hindered by another or would he not climb because he could not?'

And the good Sordello drew his finger on the ground, saying: 'See, not even this line shouldst thou cross after the sun is gone, not that anything else hinders the going up but the darkness of night; that baffles the will with helplessness. One might indeed return downward in the dark and go wandering round the hillside while the horizon holds the day shut off.'

Then my Lord, as if wondering, said: 'Lead us, then, where thou sayest we may have pleasure while we stay.'

We had gone a little way on from there when I observed that the mountain-side was hollowed out, as valleys make hollows in the mountains here. 'We will go over there' that shade said 'where the slope makes a lap of itself, and wait there for the new day.'

There was a winding path, now steep, now level, which brought us to the side of the dell at the point where the bounding ridge falls off to less than half. Gold and finé silver, cochineal and white lead, indigo bright and clear, emerald when it is newly split, every colour would be surpassed by the grass and the flowers growing in that bottom, as the less by the greater. Nor had nature only painted there, but of the sweetness of a thousand odours there it made one, blended and unknown to men. From there I saw, seated on the green turf and the flowers and singing '*Salve Regina*',[5] souls that on account of the valley were not seen from outside.

'Before the sun, now shortly sinking, goes to his nest' began the Mantuan who had directed us 'do not ask me to lead you among them there; from this bank you will make out better the movements and features of each than if received among them on the level below. He that sits highest and has the look of having been heedless of his duty and does not move his lips with the singing of the rest, was Rudolph, the Emperor,[6] who might have healed the wounds that have slain Italy, so that it is now too late for another to restore her. The other, who looks as if he comforted him, ruled the land where the waters spring that the Moldau carries to the Elbe and the Elbe to the sea; his name was Ottocar, and in swaddling-bands he was of far more worth than Wenceslaus his son, a bearded man, who battens on wantonness and ease.[7] And he with the small nose, who seems in close counsel with him that is so gracious in his looks, died in flight and deflowering the lily; look there how he beats his breast![8] See the other, who couches

his cheek on his hand and sighs. They are the father and the father-in-law of the pest of France;[9] they know his foul and vicious life and from this comes the grief that so pierces them. He that seems so sturdy and sings in time with him of the manly nose wore for his girdle the cord of every virtue,[10] and if the youth who sits behind him had reigned longer after him then indeed his virtue had passed from vessel to vessel, which none can say of the other heirs; James and Frederick have the realms, none holds the better heritage. Rarely does human worth rise through the branches, and this He wills who gives it, that it may be sought from Him. My words concern also the great-nosed one not less than the other, Peter, who sings with him, so that Apulia and Provence are now in grief; as much is the plant poorer than its seed as Constance yet boasts of her husband more than Beatrice and Margaret of theirs.[11] See the king of the simple life sitting there alone, Henry of England; he has better issue in his branches.[12] He that sits on the ground lowest among them, looking up, is the Marquis William, because of whom Alessandria and its war have brought grief on Monferrato and the Canavese.'[13]

CANTO VIII

The guardian angels; Nino Visconti; the three stars; the serpent; Conrad Malaspina

It was now the hour that turns back the longing of seafarers and melts their heart the day they have bidden dear friends farewell and pierces the new traveller with love if he hears in the distance the bell that seems to mourn the dying day, when I began to cease hearing his words and to gaze at one of the souls that had risen and was signing with his hand to be heard. He joined his palms and lifted them together, fixing his eyes on the east as if he said to God: 'For naught else I care.' '*Te lucis ante*'[1] came from his lips with such devoutness and with notes so sweet that it drew me out of myself, and then the rest joined him sweetly and devoutly through the whole hymn, keeping their eyes on the celestial wheels.

Here, reader, sharpen well thine eyes to the truth, for now, surely, the veil is so fine that to pass within is easy.

I saw the noble host silent then, looking up as if in expectancy, pallid and lowly, and I saw come forth from above and descend two angels with flaming swords broken short and without their points. They wore garments green as new-born leaves, which they trailed behind them, beaten and fanned by their green wings; one came and took

his stand a little above us and the other alighted on the opposite bank, so that the company was held between. I plainly discerned their flaxen hair, but in their faces my eyes were dazzled, as a faculty is confounded by excess.

'Both come from Mary's bosom' said Sordello 'to guard the valley, because of the serpents which will come presently.'

I, therefore, not knowing by what path, turned round, all chilled, and pressed close to the trusty shoulders.

And Sordello continued: 'Let us go down now into the valley among the great shades and we shall speak to them; it will give them much pleasure to see you.'

Only three paces, I suppose, I descended, and was below, and I saw one who kept looking at me as if he would recognize me. It was now the time when the air was already darkening, yet not so that it did not make plain between his eyes and mine what it had shut off before. He made towards me and I towards him. Noble Judge Nino,[2] what joy it was to me when I saw thee not to be among the guilty! No fair greeting was unspoken between us; then he asked: 'How long is it since thou camest to the foot of the mountain over the distant waters?'

'Oh,' I said to him 'by way of the woeful regions I came this morning, and I am in the first life, though by going thus I gain the other.'

And when they heard my answer Sordello and he drew back, like men suddenly bewildered. The one turned to Virgil, and the other to one who was seated there, calling: 'Rise, Conrad, come and see what God by His grace has willed'; then, turning to me: 'By that especial gratitude thou owest to Him who hides so deep His primal purpose that

there is no fathoming of it, when thou art beyond the breadth of waters tell my Giovanna to plead for me there where answer is given to the innocent. I do not think her mother loves me longer since she changed the white veil[3] which, in her wretchedness, she must yet long for. By her it is easy indeed to know how long love's fire endures in woman if sight and touch do not often kindle it. The viper which leads the Milanese afield will not make her so fair a tomb as the cock of Gallura would have done.' He spoke thus, his face bearing the stamp of that righteous zeal which burns in due measure in the heart.

My greedy eyes kept going to the sky just where the stars are slowest as in a wheel nearest the axle, and my Leader asked me: 'Son, what art thou gazing at up there?'

And I answered him: 'At those three torches with which the pole here is all aflame.'

And he said to me: 'The four bright stars thou sawest this morning are low down yonder and these are risen where those were.'

As he spoke, Sordello drew him to himself, saying: 'See there our adversary', and pointed his finger for him to look that way. At that part where the little valley has no rampart was a snake, such, perhaps, as gave to Eve the bitter food; through the grass and flowers came the vile streak, turning its head from time to time and licking its back like a beast that sleeks itself. I did not see and therefore cannot tell how the heavenly falcons set out, but I saw plainly both the one and the other in motion; hearing the green wings cleave the air the serpent fled, and the angels wheeled round, flying back abreast up to their posts.

The shade that had drawn close to the judge when he called had not for an instant, all through that assault, removed his gaze from me. 'So may the lantern that leads thee on high' he began 'find in thy will so much wax as is needful up to the enamelled summit, if thou hast true tidings of Valdimagra or of the parts near it, tell it to me; for there I once was great. I was called Conrad Malaspina,[4] not the old Conrad but descended from him. To my own I bore the love which here is purified.'

'Oh,' I said to him 'I never passed through your lands; but where in all Europe do men dwell that they are not renowned? The fame which honours your house proclaims alike the lords and the country, so that he knows of them who never was there, and I swear to you,[5] as I hope to go above, that your honoured race does not despoil itself of the glory of the purse and of the sword. It is so privileged by nature and by custom that, however the guilty head[6] turn the world awry, it alone goes straight and scorns the evil path.'

And he said: 'It is true; for the sun shall not return seven times to rest in the bed which the Ram covers and bestrides with all four feet[7] before this courteous opinion shall be nailed within thy brain by stronger nails than men's talk, if the course of judgement be not stayed.'

CANTO IX

The dream of the eagle; St Lucy; the gate of Purgatory

THE mistress of old Tithonus, come forth from her fond lover's arms, was already showing white on the balcony of the east, her forehead gleaming with gems set in the form of the cold beast that strikes men with its tail, and night, in the place where we were, had made two of her climbing steps and already the third was folding its wings,[1] when I, who had with me something of Adam,[2] lay down, overcome with sleep, on the grass where all five of us were already seated.

At the hour near morning when the swallow begins her plaintive songs, in remembrance, perhaps, of her ancient woes,[3] and when our mind, more a pilgrim from the flesh and less held by thoughts, is in its visions almost prophetic, I seemed to see in a dream an eagle poised in the sky, with feathers of gold, with open wings, and prepared to swoop. And I seemed to be in the place where his own people were left behind by Ganymede when he was caught up to the supreme conclave;[4] and I thought within myself,—perhaps it is used to strike only here and disdains, perhaps, to carry off any in its claws from elsewhere. Then it seemed to me that, after wheeling a while, it descended, terrible as lightning, and caught me up as far as

the fire;[5] there it seemed that it and I burned together, and the imagined fire so scorched that perforce my sleep was broken.

Even as Achilles started up, turning his awakened eyes about him and not knowing where he was, when his mother carried him off sleeping in her arms from Chiron to Scyros, whence later the Greeks took him away,[6] so I started, as soon as sleep left my eyes, and turned pale, like one that is chilled with fear. Beside me was my comfort alone, and the sun was already more than two hours high, and my face was turned to the sea.

'Have no fear,' said my Lord 'take confidence, for it is well with us, do not relax but put out all thy strength. Now thou art come to Purgatory. See there the rampart that encloses it about; see the entrance there, where it appears cleft. A little while ago, in the early dawn before day when thy soul was asleep within thee on the flowers that adorn the place below, a lady came, and she said: "I am Lucy.[7] Let me take this man that is sleeping, so I shall speed him on his way." Sordello remained with the other noble souls and she took thee up and as soon as it was clear day went on upwards, and I in her steps. Here she laid thee down; but first her fair eyes showed me that open entrance, then she and sleep together went away.'

Like one who in doubt is reassured and whose fear is turned to confidence when the truth is revealed to him, so I was changed, and as soon as my Leader saw me free from care he moved up by the rampart, and I behind him, towards the height.

Thou seest well, reader, that I rise to a higher theme; do not wonder, therefore, if I sustain it with greater art.

We drew near and came to a point from which, where at first there appeared to me merely a gap like a fissure that breaks a wall, I saw a gate, and three steps leading to it from below of different colours, and a warder, who as yet spoke not a word. And as I looked at him more intently I saw that he was seated on the uppermost step, and his face was so bright that I could not bear it, and in his hand he had a naked sword, which so reflected the rays on us that I turned my eyes often upon it in vain.

'Say from there, what would you?' he began. 'Where is the escort? Look that the ascent be not to your hurt.'

'A lady from Heaven with knowledge of these things' my Master answered him 'said to us but now: "Go that way, there is the gate." '

'And may she speed your steps in good!' the courteous warder continued; 'Come forward, then, to our stairs.'

We came on then, and the first step was white marble so smooth and clear that I mirrored myself in it in my true likeness; the second was darkest purple, of rugged and burnt stone split through its length and breadth; the third, resting its mass above, seemed to me porphyry flaming red like blood that spurts from a vein; on this the angel of God rested both his feet, sitting on the threshold which seemed to me of adamant. By the three steps my Leader drew me up with goodwill, saying: 'Ask him humbly to withdraw the bolt.'

Devoutly I threw myself at the holy feet. I asked him of his mercy that he would open to me, but first I smote three times upon my breast.

Seven *P*'s he traced on my brow with the point of the sword and said: 'When thou art within, see thou wash away these wounds.'

Ashes, or earth that is dug dry, would be of one colour with his vesture and from beneath it he drew two keys, the one of gold and the other of silver, and he applied first the white and then the yellow to the door so that I was satisfied.

'Whenever one of these keys fails so that it does not turn rightly in the lock' he said to us 'this passage does not open; the one is more precious, but the other requires much skill and wisdom before it will unlock, for it is this that looses the knot. I hold them from Peter and he bade me err rather in opening than in keeping locked, if only the souls prostrate themselves at my feet.' Then he pushed open the door in the hallowed gateway, saying: 'Enter; but I bid you know that he that looks back returns outside.'

And when the pivots of that sacred portal, which were of heavy and resounding metal, turned on the hinges, the Tarpeian roared not so loud nor showed itself so stubborn when the good Metellus was taken from it so that then it was left bare.[8]

I turned away, intent on the first note, and '*Te Deum laudamus*' I seemed to hear in voices mingled with the sweet sound; what I heard gave me the same impression we sometimes get when people are singing with an organ and the words are now distinguished, now lost.

CANTO X

The First Terrace; the sculptured wall; examples of humility; the purgation of pride

WHEN we were within the threshold of the gate which the soul's perverse love disuses, making the crooked way seem straight, by the resounding I heard it closed again; and if I had turned my eyes to it what excuse would have served for the fault?

We were climbing through a cleft in the rock which kept bending one way and the other like a wave that comes and goes, when my Leader began: 'Here there is need to use some skill in keeping close to this side or that where it turns away'; and this made our steps so scant that the waning moon had regained its bed to sink to rest before we were forth from that needle's eye.[1] But when we were free and out in the open above, where the mountain draws back, I weary and both uncertain of our way, we stopped on a level place more solitary than a desert track. From its edge bordering on the void to the foot of the lofty bank which rises sheer would measure three times a man's body, and as far as my eye could make its flight, now on the left hand, now on the right, the terrace there seemed to me the same. Our feet had not yet moved on it when I perceived that the encircling bank, which was perpendicular and impossible to climb, was of

white marble and adorned with carvings such that not only Polycletus[2] but nature would be put to shame there.

The angel who came to earth with the decree of the many-years-wept-for peace that opened heaven from its long interdict appeared before us so truly graven there in a gracious attitude that it did not seem a silent image. One would have sworn he said: '*Ave*', for she was imaged there who turned the key to open the supreme love, and in her bearing she had this word imprinted: '*Ecce ancilla Dei*' as clearly as a figure is stamped in wax.[3]

'Do not keep thy mind only on one part', said the kind Master, who had me on that side of him where the heart lies, so that I turned my face and saw beyond Mary, on the same side as he that prompted me, another story set on the rock; I went past Virgil, therefore, and drew near to it that I might have it before my eyes. There, carved in the same marble, were the cart and oxen drawing the sacred ark on account of which men fear an office not committed to them.[4] In front people appeared and the whole company, divided into seven choirs, made two of my senses say, the one: 'No', the other: 'Yes, they sing'; in the same way, at the smoke of the incense that was imaged there, eyes and nose were in contradiction, with *yes* and *no*. There the humble psalmist went before the blessed vessel girt up and dancing, and that time he was both more and less than king; opposite, figured at the window of a great palace, Michal looked on, like a woman vexed and scornful.

I moved my feet from where I was to examine close at hand another story which I saw gleaming white beyond Michal. Depicted there was the glorious deed of the Roman prince whose worth moved Gregory to his great victory,—I mean the Emperor Trajan;[5] and a poor widow was at his bridle in a posture of grief and in tears. The place about him seemed trampled and thronged with knights and the eagles on the gold above them moved visibly in the wind. The poor woman among all these seemed to say: 'Lord, avenge me for my son that is dead, for whom I am stricken'; and he to answer her: 'Wait now till I return'; and she: 'My Lord,' like one whose grief is urgent, 'if thou return not?'; and he: 'He that is in my place will do it for thee'; and she: 'What shall another's goodness avail thee if thou art forgetful of thine own?'; he therefore: 'Now take comfort, for I must fulfil my duty before I go; justice requires it and compassion bids me stay.' He for whose sight nothing was ever new wrought this visible speech, new to us because it is not found here.

While I was taking delight in gazing at the images of so great humilities, dear to sight, too, for their Craftsman's sake, 'See on this side many people,' the Poet murmured 'but coming with slow steps; they will direct us to the other stairs.' My eyes, which were looking intently, were not slow in turning to him, being eager for new sights.

But I would not have thee, reader, fall away from good resolve for hearing how God wills that the debt be paid; do not dwell on the form of the

torment, think of what follows, think that at worst it cannot go beyond the great Judgement.

'Master,' I began, 'that which I see coming to us does not seem to me persons, and I know not what they are, so confused is my sight.'

And he answered me: 'The grievous nature of their torment doubles them to the ground, so that my eyes at first were in debate about them, but look closely there and disentangle that which comes beneath these stones; already thou mayst discern how each beats his breast.'

O vainglorious Christians, weary wretches who are sick in the mind's vision and put your trust in backward steps, do you not perceive that we are worms born to form the angelic butterfly that soars to judgement without defence? Why does your mind float so high, since you are as it were imperfect insects, like the worm that is undeveloped?

As, for corbel to support ceiling or roof, a figure is sometimes seen joining the knees to the breast which begets from its unreality real distress in him that sees it, in such a posture I saw these when I looked carefully. They were indeed bent down more and less as they had more and less on their back, and he that had most patience in his looks seemed by his weeping to say: 'I can no more.'

CANTO XI

The Lord's Prayer; examples of pride; Omberto Aldobrandeschi; Oderisi; Provenzan Salvani

'OUR Father which art in heaven, not circumscribed but by the greater love Thou hast for Thy first works on high.[1]

'Praised be Thy name and power by every creature as it is meet to give thanks for Thy sweet effluence;[2]

'May the peace of Thy kingdom come to us, for we cannot reach it of ourselves, if it come not, with all our striving;

'As Thine angels make sacrifice to Thee of their will, singing hosannas, so let men make of theirs;

'Give us this day the daily manna, without which he goes backward through this harsh wilderness who most labours to advance;

'And as we forgive everyone the wrong we have suffered, do Thou also forgive in loving-kindness, and look not on our deserving;

'Our strength that yields so lightly put not to proof with the old adversary, but deliver us from him who so goads it. This last petition, dear Lord, we make not now for ourselves, for there is no need, but for them that remain behind us.'

Thus beseeching good speed for themselves and for us those shades went beneath their burden, such as one sometimes dreams of, all, unequally distressed, making their weary round on the first terrace, purging away the fog of the world. If good

words are always being spoken for us there, what can be said and done for them here by those that have their will rooted in good? Well may we help them to wash away the stains they carried hence, so that pure and light they may go forth to the starry wheels.

'Pray, so may justice and mercy soon disburden you that you may spread the wing that lifts you according to your desire, show us on which hand is the shortest way to the stair and if there is more than one passage let us know which is the less steep; for he that comes with me, for the burden of Adam's flesh with which he is clothed, is, in spite of his goodwill, slow at climbing.'

It was not plain from whom came their words that replied to those spoken by him I followed, but they were: 'Come with us along the bank on the right and you will find the opening where it is possible for a living man to climb; and were I not hindered by the stone which subdues my proud neck so that I must hold my face down I would look at this man who still lives and who is not named, to see if I know him and to move his pity for this load. I was Italian, and born of a great Tuscan. Guglielmo Aldobrandesco was my father,[3] —I know not if his name was ever heard among you. The ancient blood and gallant deeds of my ancestors made me so arrogant that, forgetful of our common mother, I carried my scorn of every man so far that I died for it,—how, the Sienese know and every child in Campagnatico. I am Omberto, and not on me alone has pride wrought ill but all my kinsfolk it has dragged with it into

calamity, and here I must bear this load for it until God be satisfied, here among the dead since I did it not among the living.'

Listening, I bent down my face, and one of them, not he that was speaking, twisted himself under the weight that cumbered him and saw me and knew me and called, laboriously keeping his eyes fixed on me, who went quite bent along with them.

'Oh,' I said to him 'art thou not Oderisi, the honour of Gubbio and of that art which they call in Paris illuminating?'[4]

'Brother,' he said 'the pages smile brighter from the brush of Franco of Bologna; he has now all the honour, of which part is mine. Truly, I should not have been so courteous while I lived, for the great desire to excel on which my heart was set; for such pride we here pay the fee, and I should not yet be here were it not that, having power to sin, I turned to God. O empty glory of human powers, how briefly lasts the green on its top, unless it is followed by an age of dulness! In painting Cimabue thought to hold the field and now Giotto has the cry, so that the other's fame is dim;[5] so has the one Guido taken from the other the glory of our tongue,[6] and he, perhaps, is born that shall chase the one and the other from the nest. The world's noise is but a breath of wind which comes now this way and now that and changes name because it changes quarter. What more fame shalt thou have if thou put off thy flesh when it is old than if thou hadst died before giving up *pappo* and *dindi*,[7] when a thousand years are past, which is a shorter space to eternity than the twinkling of an eye to the slowest-turning circle in the heavens?[8]

Of him who makes so little headway in front of me all Tuscany resounded, and now there is hardly a whisper of him in Siena, where he was Lord when the mad rabble of Florence was destroyed, at that time as proud as now it is prostitute. Your renown is the colour of grass which comes and goes, and that withers it by which it springs green from the ground.'

And I said to him: 'Thy true speech fills my heart with good humbleness and abates a great swelling in me. But who is he of whom thou didst speak now?'

'That' he replied 'is Provenzan Salvani,[9] and he is here because in his presumption he thought to bring all Siena into his hands; he has gone thus, and goes without rest, since he died. Such coin he pays in quittance who is too daring yonder.'

And I said: 'If the spirit that awaits the verge of life before repenting stays there below and does not ascend here, unless good prayers help him, till as much time pass as he lived, how was it granted him to come here?'

'When he was living most gloriously' he said 'he freely took his stand in the market-place of Siena, putting aside all shame, and there, to deliver his friend from the pains he suffered in the prison of Charles, he brought himself to tremble in every vein.[10] I will not say more, and I know I speak darkly; but little time will pass till thy townsmen act so that thou canst make thy comment on it. This deed released him from those bounds.'

CANTO XII

The figured pavement; the proud brought low; the angel of humility

SIDE by side with that burdened soul, as oxen go in a yoke, I went on as long as the gentle schoolmaster[1] allowed; but when he said: 'Leave them and pass on, for here it is well that with sail and oar and with all his force each drive his bark', I raised my body erect again as one should walk, though my thoughts remained bowed down and shrunk.

I had set out and was following eagerly in my Master's steps and both of us were showing now how light of foot we were, when he said to me: 'Turn down thine eyes; it will be well for thee to beguile the way by seeing the bed beneath thy feet.'

As over the buried dead, that there may be remembrance of them, the pavement tombs bear designs of what they were before, for which tears are often shed there at the prick of memory that spurs only the pitiful; so I saw figured there, but by the craftsmanship of better likeness, the whole breadth of the roadway that projects from the mountain.

I saw him that was created nobler than any other creature fall as lightning from heaven, on the one side;[2]

I saw Briareus on the other side, pierced by the heavenly shaft, lying heavy on the ground in the chill of death;

I saw Thymbraeus, I saw Pallas and Mars, still armed, about their father, gazing on the giants' scattered limbs;

I saw Nimrod at the foot of his mighty work, as if bewildered, and he was looking at the peoples in Shinar that shared his pride.

O Niobe, I saw thee traced on the roadway, with what tearful eyes, between thy seven and seven children slain!

O Saul, how thou appearedst there dead on thine own sword in Gilboa, which never after felt rain or dew!

O mad Arachne, so did I see thee already half spider, wretched on the shreds of the web thou wroughtest to thy hurt!

O Rehoboam, thine image here does not seem now to threaten, but a chariot bears it off full of terror when no one gives chase!

It showed too, that hard pavement, how Alcmaeon made the luckless ornament seem costly to his mother;

It showed how his sons fell upon Sennacherib within the temple, and how they left him there dead;

It showed the destruction and the cruel butchery that Tomyris wrought when she said to Cyrus: 'Thou didst thirst for blood and with blood I fill thee';

It showed how the Assyrians fled in rout after Holofernes was slain, and also the remains of that slaughter.

I saw Troy in ashes and in heaps; O Ilion,[3] how abased and vile the design showed thee that we saw there!

What master of brush or chisel could have portrayed the shapes and outlines there, which would have filled with wonder a discerning mind? The dead seemed dead and the living living. He saw no better than I who saw the truth of all that which I trod upon while I went stooping. Wax

proud now and go your way with lofty looks, sons of Eve, and bend not down your face to see your evil path!

More of the mountain was now encircled by us and much more of the sun's track was sped than my mind, not being free, had reckoned, when he who was always looking ahead as he went began: 'Lift up thy head![4] There is no more time to go thus absorbed. See there an angel who hastes to meet us. See how the sixth handmaid returns from the service of the day.[5] Let thy looks and bearing be graced with reverence, that it may please him to direct us upwards. Remember that to-day never dawns again.'

I was well accustomed to his admonitions never to lose time, so that in that matter his speech could not be dark to me.

Towards us came the fair creature, clothed in white, and in his face he seemed like a trembling star at dawn. He opened his arms, then spread his wings and said: 'Come; the steps are at hand here and henceforth the climb is easy. To this bidding they are very few that come. O race of men, born to fly upward, why do you fall back so for a little wind?'

He brought us where the rock was cleft, there smote on my forehead with his wings, then promised me safe journeying. As on the right hand in climbing the hill where the church stands above Rubaconte that dominates the well-guided city the bold scarp of the ascent is broken by the stairs which were made in an age when the records and measures were safe,[6] so the bank that falls there very steeply from the other circle is made easier, but the lofty rock presses close on the one

side and the other. When we were turning our steps there, '*Beati pauperes spiritu*'[7] was sung in such tones as no words would tell. Ah, how different these passages from those of Hell, for here the entrance is with songs and there with fierce lamentations!

Now we mounted by the sacred stairway, and I seemed to be far lighter than before on the level, so that I said: 'Master, tell me, what weight has been lifted from me that I find almost no labour in going?'

He answered: 'When the *P*'s that are still left on thy brow all but effaced shall be wholly removed, as the one has been, thy feet will be so mastered by goodwill that not only will they feel no labour but it will be their delight to be urged upward.'

Then I did like those going with something on their head unknown to them but that the signs of others make them suspect, so that the hand helps to make sure and searches and finds, doing the office that sight cannot serve, and with the spread fingers of my right hand I found only six of the letters that he with the keys had traced on my temples; and observing this my Leader smiled.

CANTO XIII

The Second Terrace; examples of kindness; the purgation of envy; Sapia

We were at the top of the stair where a second time the mountain is cut away that heals men as they climb; there a terrace girds the hill about like the first, except that its arc takes a sharper curve. No shade is there nor is any carving to be seen. We saw the bank and the bare road, with the livid colour of the stone.

'If we wait here to enquire of people,' the Poet observed 'I fear our choice may perhaps be delayed too long.' Then he set his eyes steadily on the sun, made of his right side a centre for his movement, and brought round his left. 'O sweet light by trust in which I enter on this new road,' he said 'do thou guide us with the guidance that is needful in this place. Thou givest warmth to the world, thou sheddest light upon it. Unless other reason urge the contrary thy beams must always be our guide.'

We had already gone as far there as here we should reckon a mile—in a short time, for our will was eager—when flying towards us spirits were heard, but not seen, uttering courteous biddings to the table of love. The first voice that flew by called loudly: '*Vinum non habent*'[1] and passed on repeating it behind us; and before it was quite out of

hearing in the distance another passed, crying: 'I am Orestes',[2] and it too did not stay. 'O Father,' I said 'what voices are these?' And as I asked there was a third, saying: 'Love them from whom you have suffered wrong.'[3]

And the good Master said: 'This circle scourges the sin of envy, therefore the cords of the scourge are drawn from love. The curb must be of contrary sound; I think thou wilt hear it, if I can judge, before reaching the pass of pardon. But direct thy sight steadily through the air and thou wilt see people before us, all of them seated along the cliff.'

Then, opening my eyes wider than before, I looked in front of me and saw shades with cloaks not differing in colour from the stone, and when we were a little farther on I heard cries of 'Mary, pray for us', then 'Michael' and 'Peter' and 'All saints'.[4]

I do not think there walks on earth today a man so hard that he would not have been pierced with pity at what I saw then, for when I had come so near them that their actions became plain to me great grief was wrung from my eyes. They appeared to me to be covered with coarse hair-cloth and the one supported the other with his shoulder and all were supported by the bank. Just so the blind who are destitute take their place at pardons[5] to beg for their needs and one sinks his head on another so that the people may be quickly moved to pity not only by the sound of their words but by their looks which plead no less; and as the sun does not profit the blind, so to the shades in the place I speak of heaven's light denies its bounty, for an

iron wire pierces all their eyelids and stitches them up, as is done to an untamed falcon when it will not be still.

It seemed to me as I went that I did outrage, seeing others without being seen, so that I turned to my wise counsel. Well he knew what the dumb would say and therefore did not wait for my question, but said: 'Speak, and be brief and to the point.'

Virgil was coming with me on that side of the terrace where one might fall over, for there was no parapet surrounding it, and on the other side of me were the devout shades who were forcing through the horrible seam the tears that bathed their cheeks. I turned to them and began: 'O people assured of seeing the light on high which alone is the object of your desire, so may grace soon clear the scum of your conscience and the stream of memory flow down through it pure, tell me, for I shall hold the kindness dear, if there is any soul here among you that is Italian, and perhaps it will be well for him if I know of it.'

'O my brother, we are every one citizens of one true city;[6] but thou wouldst say, any that lived in Italy a pilgrim.' This I seemed to hear for answer a little distance on from where I was, so I made myself heard still farther that way. Among the rest I saw a shade that looked expectant, and if any would ask how, it was lifting up its chin in the manner of the blind.

'Spirit' I said 'who subduest thyself to mount, if it be thou that answered me make thyself known to me either by place or name.'

'I was of Siena,' it replied 'and with these others I cleanse here my sinful life, weeping to Him that

He grant Himself to us. Sapient I was not though I was called Sapia,[7] and I rejoiced far more at others' hurt than at my own good fortune; and lest thou think I deceive thee hear if I was not, as I tell thee, mad when the arc of my years was already descending.[8] My townsmen were near Colle and had joined battle with their enemies, and I prayed God for that which He had willed; there they were routed and turned back in the bitter steps of flight, and seeing the chase I was filled with gladness beyond all bounds, so that I turned upward my bold face, crying to God: "Now I fear Thee no more", as the blackbird did for a little sunshine.[9] I sought peace with God at the very end of my life, and my debt would not yet be lessened by penitence had it not been that Peter the comb-seller, who of his charity was grieved for me, had me in remembrance in his devout petitions.[10] But who art thou that goest asking of our condition and hast, as I think, thine eyes free and speakest with breath?'

'My eyes' I said 'will yet be taken from me here, but only for a little, for they have little offended with looks of envy; far greater is the fear, which holds my soul in suspense, of the torment below, so that already the load down there is heavy upon me.'

And she said to me: 'Who then has led thee up here among us, if thou thinkest to return below?'

And I: 'He that is with me here and does not speak; and I am alive, and therefore ask of me, elect spirit, if thou wouldst have me yet move for thee yonder my mortal feet.'

'Ah,' she replied 'this is so strange a thing to hear that it is a great token that God loves thee. Help me sometimes, therefore, with thy prayers.

And I entreat thee by what thou cravest most that if ever thou tread the soil of Tuscany thou restore my name among my kindred. Thou wilt see them among that vain people which hopes in Talamone and which will lose more hopes in it than in the finding of the Diana,'—but more still will the admirals lose there.'[11]

CANTO XIV

Guido del Duca; the Arno; the degeneracy of Romagna; examples of envy

'WHO is this that makes the circuit of our mountain before death has given him flight, and opens and shuts his eyes at his pleasure?'

'I know not who he is, but I know he is not alone. Question him, since thou art nearer, and greet him kindly that he may speak.'

Thus two spirits,[1] leaning towards each other, talked of me there on my right, then bent back their faces to speak to me, and one said: 'O soul still held in the body who makest thy way heavenward, gratify us of thy charity and tell us whence thou comest and who thou art; for thou makest us marvel as much at the grace given thee as a thing must that never was before.'

And I: 'Through mid-Tuscany winds a stream that rises in Falterona[2] and a hundred miles of course do not suffice for it; from its bank I bring this form. To tell you who I am would be to speak in vain, for my name as yet makes little sound.'

'If I have the wit rightly to catch thy meaning,' he that had spoken first then answered me 'thou speakest of the Arno.'

And the other said to him: 'Why did he conceal that river's name, just as one does with something horrible?'

And the shade that was questioned delivered himself thus: 'I know not, but it is fitting indeed that the name of such a valley perish; for from its

source, where the rugged mountain-chain from which Pelorus[3] is broken off so teems with waters that in few places it is surpassed, down to where it gives itself up to restore what the sky draws from the sea so that the rivers may be supplied in their course, virtue is fled from as an enemy by all as if it were a snake, either from some mischief in the place or from bad custom goading them, and the dwellers in that wretched valley have so changed their nature that it seems as if Circe had them at pasture. Among filthy hogs,[4] fitter for acorns than for any food made for men, it first directs its feeble course; then, coming lower, it finds curs[5] that snarl more than their power warrants, and in scorn turns its snout from them; it goes on falling and the more it swells the more does the accursed and ill-starred ditch find the dogs turned to wolves;[6] then, after descending through many a hollow gorge, it finds foxes[7] so full of guile that they have no fear that any trap can take them. Nor will I refrain from speech because another hears me, and it will be well for him if he yet bear in mind what a true inspiration unfolds for me. I see thy grandson,[8] who becomes hunter of those wolves on the bank of the savage stream and puts them all in terror; he sells their flesh still living, then slaughters them like old cattle; many he robs of life, and himself of honour; he comes forth bloody from the wretched wood and leaves it in such a case that in a thousand years from now it will not re-forest itself as it was before.'

As at the announcement of grievous ills the face of one listening is troubled, from whatever quarter

the danger assail him, so I saw the other soul, which had turned to hear, become troubled and downcast when it had taken in these words.

The speech of the one and the other's look made me eager to know their names and with much entreaty I questioned them; so the spirit that spoke to me before began again: 'Thou wilt have me consent to do for thee what thou wilt not for me; but since God wills that His grace should so shine forth in thee, I will not be grudging with thee; know, therefore, that I am Guido del Duca. So inflamed with envy was my blood that if I had seen a man make merry thou hadst seen me suffused with livid colour. Of my sowing I reap such straw. O race of men, why do you set your hearts where must needs be exclusion of partnership?

'This is Rinier, this is the boast and honour of the house of Calboli, where none since has made himself heir to his worth. And not his blood alone, between the Po and the mountains and from the Reno to the sea,[9] is stripped of the virtues that belong to earnest and to sport; for within these bounds the land is so filled with poisonous shoots that now it would take long tillage to destroy them. Where is the good Lizio,[10] and Arrigo Mainardi, Pier Traversaro and Guido di Carpigna? O Romagnoles, turned to bastards! When does a Fabbro take root again in Bologna? When in Faenza a Bernardin di Fosco, noble scion of a lowly plant? Do not marvel, Tuscan, if I weep when I remember Guido da Prata and Ugolin d'Azzo, who lived among us, Federico Tignoso and his company, the Traversaro house and the Anastagi—the one family and the other now without an heir—the ladies and the

knights, the toils and the sports to which we were moved by love and courtesy where hearts have grown so wicked. O Bertinoro,[11] why dost thou not make away with thyself, when thy family, with many others, has gone to escape corruption? Bagnacavallo does well that breeds no more, and Castrocaro ill, and Conio worse that still troubles to breed such counts. The Pagani will do well when their Devil[12] takes himself off, yet not so that a clean record shall ever be left of them. O Ugolin de' Fantolini, thy name is safe, since no more are looked for who might blacken it by degeneracy. But now, Tuscan, go on thy way, for now my pleasure is far more to weep than talk, our converse has so wrung my heart.'

We knew that those dear spirits heard us go; their silence, therefore, made us confident of the way. When we passed on by ourselves, a voice like lightning when it cleaves the air encountered us, saying: 'Everyone that findeth me shall slay me',[13] and fled, like thunder that dies away when the cloud bursts suddenly. As soon as our ears had respite from it, lo, another with such uproar that it was like a thunder-clap that follows quickly: 'I am Aglauros that turned to stone';[14] and then, to draw close to the Poet, I made a step to the right, not forward.

The air was now quiet on every side and he said to me: 'That was the hard bit which should hold a man within his bounds; but you take the bait, so that the hook of the old adversary draws you to him, and then little avails curb or lure. The

heavens call you and wheel about you, showing you their eternal beauties, and your eyes gaze only on the earth; therefore He smites you who sees all.'

CANTO XV

The angel of mercy; spiritual partnership; the Third Terrace; visions of gentleness

As much as between the ending of the third hour and the beginning of the day appears of the circle which is always playing like a child, so much appeared now to be left of the sun's course towards nightfall; it was evening there and here midnight. And the beams were striking us full in the face, for the mountain was so far encircled by us that we were going straight towards the west,[1] when I felt my brow weighed down by the splendour far more than before and the causes being unknown left me dazed. I raised my hand, therefore, above my eyebrows and made for myself the shade that tempers excess of light. As when from water or mirror the beam leaps the opposite way, rising at the same angle as it descends, and at an equal length departs as much from the fall of the stone, as is shown by science and experiment, so it seemed to me I was struck by light reflected there before me, so that my sight was quick to flee.

'What is that, gentle Father,' I said 'from which I cannot rightly screen my eyes and which seems to be moving towards us?'

'Do not marvel' he answered me 'if the household of heaven still dazzle thee; it is a messenger who comes to invite to the ascent; soon the seeing of these will not be hard for thee, but as great delight as nature has fitted thee to feel.'

When we had reached the blessed angel he said with a glad voice: 'Enter here', at a stairway far less steep than the others. We were mounting, having already passed on from there, when '*Beati misericordes*'[2] was sung behind us and 'Rejoice, thou that overcomest.'

My Master and I went up by ourselves, and I thought as I went to gain profit from his words and I turned to him and asked: 'What did the spirit from Romagna mean when he spoke of *exclusion* and *partnership*?'

Then he said to me: 'He knows the cost of his own worst fault and therefore it is little wonder if he utter reproach against it that there may be less to mourn for. It is because your desires are fixed where the part is lessened by sharing that envy blows the bellows to your sighs; but if the love of the highest sphere bent upward your longing, that fear would not be in your breast. For there, the more they are who say *ours*, the more of good does each possess and the more of charity burns in that cloister.'

'I am more hungry for satisfaction' I said 'than if I had been silent before and my mind is more filled with perplexity. How can it be that a good distributed among a greater number of possessors makes them richer in it than if it were possessed by few?'

And he to me: 'Because thou still settest thy mind on earthly things thou gatherest darkness

from the very light. That infinite and unspeakable good which is there above speeds to love as a sunbeam comes to a bright body; so much it gives of itself as it finds of ardour, so that the more charity extends the more does the eternal goodness increase upon it, and the more souls that are enamoured there above the more there are to be rightly loved and the more love there is and like a mirror the one returns it to the other. And if my speech do not relieve thy hunger thou shalt see Beatrice and she will deliver thee wholly from this and every other craving. Strive only that soon may be erased, as the other two are already, the five wounds which are healed by being painful.'

When I was about to say: 'Thou contentest me' I saw that I had reached the next circle, so that my eager eyes held me silent. There I seemed to be rapt of a sudden in an ecstatic vision and to see many people in a temple and a woman at the door with the sweet demeanour of a mother, who said: 'My son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.'[3] And as here she was silent, that which first appeared vanished. Then appeared to me another woman, with those waters running down her cheeks that grief distils when it springs from great resentment against another, and she said: 'If thou art lord of the city for whose name was such strife among the gods and from which all knowledge shines forth, avenge thee of those daring arms that have embraced our daughter, O Pisistratus.'[4] And her lord seemed to me to answer her graciously and gently and with tranquil look: 'What shall we do to one that seeks our hurt if we condemn one that loves us?' Then I saw people kindled

with the fire of wrath slaying a youth with stones, and they kept crying loudly to each other: 'Kill! kill!'[5] And I saw him sink to the earth, for already death was heavy upon him, but of his eyes he made all the time gateways to heaven, in that great agony praying to the Lord on high to pardon his persecutors, with that look which unlocks compassion.

When my soul returned without to the things that are real outside of it, I recognized my not false errors. My Leader, who could see me act like one that frees himself from sleep, said: 'What ails thee, that thou canst not support thyself but hast come more than half a league with veiled eyes and stumbling feet, like a man overcome with wine or sleep?'

'O my kind Father,' I said 'if thou listen to me I will tell thee what appeared to me when my legs were so taken from me.' And he: 'If thou hadst a hundred masks upon thy face even thy faintest thoughts would not be hid from me. What thou sawest was shown thee that thou mightst not refuse to open thy heart to the waters of peace which are poured from the eternal fountain. I did not ask what ails thee for the reason of one that looks only with an unseeing eye when another's body lies insensible, but I asked in order to give force to thy feet. So must the sluggish be spurred, slow to use their waking hour when it returns.'

We were going on through the evening, looking intently ahead as far as our eyes could reach against the bright late beams, when lo, little by little a smoke approaching us as black as night, nor was there room to escape from it. This took from us our sight and the pure air.

CANTO XVI

The purgation of anger; Marco Lombardo; human degeneracy; the Church's misguiding of the world

GLOOM of Hell or night bereft of every planet under a barren sky overcast everywhere with cloud never made a veil to my sight so heavy or of stuff so harsh to the sense as that smoke which covered us there so that it did not let the eye stay open; therefore my wise and trusty escort came close to me and offered me his shoulder. Just as a blind man goes behind his guide that he may not stray or knock against what might injure or perhaps kill him, so I went through the foul and bitter air listening to my Leader, who kept saying: 'See that thou art not cut off from me.' I heard voices and each seemed to pray for peace and mercy to the Lamb of God that takes away sins. Their beginning was always *Agnus Dei*[1] and all had the same words and the same measure so that among them seemed to be complete accord. 'Are these spirits, Master, that I hear?' I said; and he answered me: 'Thou judgest right, and they are now loosing the knot of anger.'

'Who then art thou that cleavest our smoke and speakest of us just as if thou still measuredst time by calends?'[2] Thus one voice spoke. Then my

Master said: 'Answer, and ask if the way up is from here.' And I: 'O creature who cleansest thyself to return fair to Him that made thee, thou shalt hear a marvel if thou bear me company.' 'I will follow thee as far as is allowed me,' he replied 'and if the smoke does not let us see, hearing will keep us together instead.'

Then I began: 'With those swaddling-bands which death unwinds I make my way upward and I came here through the anguish of Hell; and since God has so received me into His grace that He wills that I see His court in a way quite strange to modern use, do not hide from me who thou wast before death, but tell me, and tell me if I am on the right way to the passage, and thy words shall be our escort.'

'I was Lombard and was called Marco.[3] I knew the world and loved that worth at which all have now unbent the bow. For mounting up thou goest straight on.' Thus he replied, and added: 'I pray thee that thou pray for me when thou art above.'

And I said to him: 'I pledge my faith to thee to do what thou askest of me. But I am bursting from a doubt within if I do not free myself from it; single before, it is now doubled by thy statement, which confirms to me here that elsewhere with which I couple it.[4] The world is indeed thus wholly barren of every virtue, as thou declarest to me, and pregnant and overspread with wickedness, but I beg thee to point out to me the cause that I may see it and show it to men, for one places it in the heavens and another here below.'

He first heaved a deep sigh, which grief forced to 'Alas!', then began: 'Brother, the world is blind and indeed thou comest from it. You that are

living refer every cause up to the heavens alone, just as if they moved all things with them by necessity. If it were so, free choice would be destroyed in you and there would be no justice in happiness for well-doing and misery for evil. The heavens initiate your impulses; I do not say all, but, if I did, light is given on good and evil, and free will, and if it bear the strain in the first battlings with the heavens, then, being rightly nurtured, it conquers all. To a greater power and to a better nature you, free, are subject, and that creates the mind in you which the heavens have not in their charge. Therefore if the present world goes astray, in you is the cause, in you let it be sought; and in this I will be to thee now a faithful scout. From His hand who regards it fondly before it is, comes forth, like a child that sports, tearful and smiling, the little simple soul that knows nothing, but, moved by a joyful Maker, turns eagerly to what delights it. At first it tastes the savour of a trifling good; it is beguiled there and runs after it, if guide or curb do not divert its love. Therefore there was need for law to be set as a curb; there was need for a king who should discern at least the tower of the true city. Laws there are, but who sets hand to them? None; because the shepherd who goes before may chew the cud but has not the hoofs divided;[5] the people, therefore, who see their leader snatch only at that good for which they themselves are greedy, feed on that and ask for nothing more. Thou canst see plainly that ill-guiding is the cause that has made the world wicked, and not nature that is corrupt

in you. Rome, which made the good world, used to have two suns[6] which made plain the one way and the other, that of the world and that of God. The one has quenched the other and the sword is joined to the crook,[7] and the one together with the other must perforce go ill, since, joined, the one does not fear the other. If thou dost not believe me, consider the ear of corn, for every plant is known by its seed. On the land that is watered by the Adige and the Po valour and courtesy were once to be found, before Frederick met with strife;[8] now it may be safely traversed by anyone who for shame would avoid speaking with the good or coming near them. There are yet indeed three old men in whom the ancient times rebuke the new, and it seems to them long till God remove them to a better life: Currado da Palazzo and the good Gherardo and Guido da Castel, who is better named in the French fashion the guileless Lombard.[9] Tell henceforth that the Church of Rome, by confounding in itself two governments, falls in the mire and befouls both itself and its burden.'

'O my Marco,' I said 'thou reasonest well, and now I perceive why the sons of Levi were debarred from inheritance.[10] But what Gherardo is this who, thou sayest, is left as an example of the extinct race in reproach of the barbarous age?'

'Either thy speech deceives me' he replied 'or it puts me to the test, for, speaking to me in Tuscan, it seems thou knowest nothing of the good Gherardo; I know him by no other surname unless I take it from his daughter Gaia. God be with you, for I come with you no farther. Thou seest the brightness that shines through the smoke already whitening, and I must go—the angel is there—before I am seen by him.'

So he turned back and would not hear me more.

CANTO XVII

Visions of anger; the angel of peace; disordered love the principle of sin

RECALL, reader, if ever in the mountains mist caught thee for which thou couldst not see except as moles do through the skin,[1] how, when the moist, dense vapours begin to disperse, the sun's disk passes feebly through them; and thy imagination will quickly come to see how, at first, I saw the sun again, now near its setting. So, measuring mine with the faithful steps of my Master, I came forth from such a fog to the beams which were already dead on the shores below.

O imagination, which so steals us at times from outward things that we pay no heed though a thousand trumpets sound about us, who moves thee if the senses offer thee nothing? A light moves thee which takes form in the heavens, either of itself or by a will which directs it downwards. Of her impious deed who changed her shape into the bird that most delights to sing[2] the impress appeared in my imagination, and at this my mind was so withdrawn within itself that nothing came from without that was then received by it. Then rained down within the high fantasy one crucified, scornful and fierce in his look, and he was dying so;[3] about him were the great Ahasuerus and Esther his wife and the just Mordecai, who was in word and deed

of such integrity. And as this image broke up of itself, like a bubble lacking the water in which it forms, there arose in my vision a girl weeping bitterly, and she said: 'O Queen, why for anger hast thou chosen not to be? Thou hast killed thyself not to lose Lavinia. Now thou hast lost me. It is I who mourn, Mother, for thy destruction before another's.'[4]

As sleep is broken when new light strikes suddenly on the closed eyes and, being broken, wavers before it quite dies away, so my imagination fell from me as soon as a light, far brighter than the light we know, smote on my face. I was turning to see where I was when a voice said: 'Here is the ascent', and drew me away from every other thought; and it made my desire so eager to see who it was that spoke that it never can rest till it is face to face. But as at the sun, which weighs down our sight and veils its form by excess, so my power there came short.

'This is a divine spirit who directs us to the way upward without our asking and hides himself with his own light; he does with us as a man with himself, for he that waits for the asking and sees the need turns his mind already to a harsh refusal. Now let us make our steps answer to such a bidding and let us endeavour to ascend before it darkens, for then it is not possible till day returns.' My Leader spoke thus, and together we turned our footsteps to a stairway; and as soon as I was on the first step I felt beside me as it were the motion of a wing fanning my face and I heard the words: '*Beati pacifici*[5] who are without sinful anger.'

Already the last rays before nightfall were lifted so high above us that the stars were showing on many sides. 'O my strength, why dost thou so melt away?' I said within myself, for I felt the power of my legs suspended. We were where the stair went no higher and were stopped just like a ship that comes to shore; and I listened for a little if I could hear anything in the new circle, then turned to my Master and said: 'My kind Father, tell me, what offence is purged in this circle where we are? If our feet are stayed, do not stay thy speech.'

And he said to me: 'The love of good which comes short of its duty is here restored, here the too slack oar is plied anew; but, that thou mayst understand yet more clearly, turn thy mind to me and thou shalt pluck some good fruit from our delay.'

'Neither Creator nor creature, my son, was ever without love, either natural or of the mind,' he began 'and this thou knowest; the natural is always without error, but the other may err through a wrong object or through excess or defect of vigour. While it is directed on the primal good and on the secondary keeps right measure[6] it cannot be the cause of sinful pleasure; but when it is warped to evil, or with more or with less concern than is due[7] pursues its good, against the Creator works His creature. From this thou canst understand that love must be the seed in you of every virtue and of every action deserving punishment. Now since love can never turn its face from the welfare of its subject[8] all things are secure from

self-hatred, and since no being can be conceived as severed from the First One and self-existing every creature is cut off from hatred of Him.[9] It follows, if I distinguish rightly, that the evil that is loved is a neighbour's, and this love springs up in three ways in your clay.[10] There is he that hopes to excel by the abasement of his neighbour and for that sole reason longs that from his greatness he may be brought low; there is he that fears to lose power, favour, honour, and fame because another surpasses, by which he is so aggrieved that he loves the contrary; and there is he that feels himself so disgraced by insult that he becomes greedy of vengeance, and such a one must needs contrive another's harm. These three forms of love are wept for there below.

'Now I would have thee give thought to the other, which pursues its good in faulty measure. Everyone confusedly apprehends a good in which the mind may be at rest and desires it, so that each strives to reach it, and if the love is sluggish that draws you to see it or gain it, this terrace, after due repentance, torments you for that.[11] Other good there is which does not make men happy; it is not happiness, it is not the Good Essence, the fruit and root of every good.[12] The love which abandons itself to that[13] is wept for above us in three circles, but how it is described as threefold I do not say, that thou mayst search it out for thyself.'

CANTO XVIII

The exposition of love; the Fourth Terrace; the purgation of sloth; examples of zeal and sloth

THE lofty Teacher had made an end of his discourse and looked intently in my face to see if I was satisfied; and I, whom a new thirst was urging still, kept silence without and said within myself: 'Perhaps I trouble him with too much questioning.' But that true father, who was aware of the timid desire that did not declare itself, spoke and gave me courage to speak; I said therefore: 'Master, my sight is so quickened in thy light that I discern clearly all that thy words set forth and explain; I pray therefore, dear and gentle Father, that thou expound love to me, to which thou reducest every good action and its opposite.'

'Direct on me the keen eyes of thy understanding' he said 'and the error will be manifest to thee of the blind who make themselves guides. The mind, created quick to love, is readily moved towards everything that pleases, as soon as by the pleasure it is roused to action. Your perception takes from outward reality an impression and unfolds it within you, so that it makes the mind turn to it; and if the mind, so turned, inclines to it, that inclination is love, that is nature, which by pleasure is bound on you afresh.[1] Then, as fire moves upward by its form, being born to mount where it most abides

in its matter, so the mind thus seized enters into desire, which is a spiritual movement, and never rests till the thing loved makes it rejoice. Now may be plain to thee how hidden is the truth for those who maintain that every love is in itself praiseworthy, perhaps because its matter always seems good; but not every stamp is good, even if it be good wax.'[2]

'Thy words and my following wit' I answered him 'have revealed the nature of love to me, but that has made me more full of perplexity; for if love is offered to us from without and if the soul moves with no other feet, it has no merit whether it goes straight or crooked.'

And he said to me: 'As far as reason sees here I can tell thee; beyond that wait only for Beatrice, for it is matter of faith. Every substantial form,[3] being both distinct from matter and united with it, holds within itself a specific virtue, which is not perceived except in operation nor is ever demonstrated but by its effect, as life in a plant by green leaves. Therefore, whence come the knowledge of primary ideas and the bent to the primary objects of desire, no man knows; they are in you just as in bees zeal to make honey and this primal will admits no deserving of praise or blame. Now in order that to this will every other may be conformed[4] there is innate in you the faculty which counsels and which ought to hold the threshold of assent. This is the principle in which is found the reason of desert in you according as it garners and winnows out good and guilty loves. Those who in their reasoning went to the root recognized this innate freedom and therefore left ethics to the world.[5]

Admitting then that every love that is kindled in you arises of necessity, the power to control it is in you; that noble faculty Beatrice means by freewill and therefore see thou have it in mind if she would speak of it to thee.'

The moon, delayed almost to midnight, made the stars appear scarcer to us, being shaped like a bucket that is all on fire, and its course against the sky was on those tracks which the sun inflames when one at Rome sees it set between the Sardinians and the Corsicans;[6] and that noble shade through whom Pietola[7] is more famed than any other Mantuan town had laid down the load with which I burdened him, so that I, having garnered his clear and explicit discourse on my questions, remained like one that rambles drowsily.

But this drowsiness was taken from me suddenly by people who had now come round to us behind our back; and as Ismenus and Asopus saw of old a tumult and throng on their banks at night whenever the Thebans had need of Bacchus,[8] such a throng came bending their way round that circle, whom, by what I saw of them, right will and just love were driving on. Soon they were upon us, for all that great crowd kept running, and two in front cried out with tears: 'Mary went into the hill country with haste',[9] and 'Caesar, to subdue Lerida, thrust at Marseilles and then made speed to Spain.'[10] 'Haste, haste, lest time be lost for little love,' the rest cried behind 'that zeal in well-doing may make grace come green again.'

'O people in whom keen fervour now makes good, perhaps, negligence and delay that you have shown by lukewarmness in well-doing, this man,

who lives—and indeed I do not lie to you—would go up as soon as the sun shines on us again; tell us, then, where the opening is at hand.'

These were my Leader's words, and one of those spirits said: 'Come behind us and thou shalt find the gap. We are so filled with desire to keep moving that we cannot rest; pardon us, then, if thou take our penance for discourtesy. I was Abbot of San Zeno at Verona under the rule of the good Barbarossa, of whom Milan still talks with grief;[11] and there is one that has already a foot in the grave who will soon weep on account of that monastery and will be wretched for having had power there, because his son, defective in body, worse in mind, and basely born, he has put in place of its true shepherd.'[12]

I do not know whether he said more or was silent, he had already run on so far past us, but this I heard and chose to retain.

And he that was my succour in every need said: 'Turn round here; see two of them who come putting a bit on sloth.' Behind all the rest they were saying: 'The people for whom the sea opened were dead before Jordan saw its heirs',[13] and 'Those that did not endure the toil to the end with Anchises' son gave themselves to a life without glory.'[14]

Then when these shades were so far parted from us that they could no longer be seen a new thought arose within me, from which others many and diverse were born; and I rambled so from one to the other that in my wandering my eyes closed and I changed my musing into dream.

CANTO XIX

The dream of the Siren; the angel of zeal; the Fifth Terrace; the purgation of avarice and prodigality; Pope Adrian V

IN the hour when the day's heat, overcome by the earth and sometimes by Saturn, can no longer temper the cold of the moon,[1] when the geomancers see their *Fortuna Major*[2] rise in the east before dawn by a path which does not long stay dark for it, there came to me in dream a woman, stammering, cross-eyed, and crooked on her feet, with maimed hands and of sallow hue. I gazed at her, and as the sun revives cold limbs benumbed by the night, so my look gave her a ready tongue and then in a little time made her quite erect and coloured her wan features as love desires. When she had her speech thus set free she began to sing so that it would have been hard for me to turn my mind from her. 'I am,' she sang 'I am the sweet siren who beguile the sailors in mid-sea, so great delight it is to hear me. I turned Ulysses,[3] eager on his way, to my song, and he who dwells with me rarely departs, so wholly I content him.' Her lips were not yet closed again when a lady holy and alert appeared beside me to put her to confusion. 'O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?' she said

with anger. And he came with his eyes fixed on that honourable one; he seized the other and laid her bare in front, tearing her clothes, and showed me her belly. That awoke me with the stench that came from her. I turned my eyes to the good Master. 'Three times at least I have called thee,' he said 'rise and come, let us find the opening by which thou enterest.'

I rose up; and all the circles of the holy mountain were already filled with high day and we went on with the new sun at our back. Following him, I bore my brow like one who has it burdened with thought and makes of himself a half-arch of a bridge, when I heard: 'Come, here is the passage,' spoken in such sweet and gracious tones as are not heard within these mortal bounds. With open wings which seemed a swan's he that spoke to us directed us upward between the two walls of flinty stone, then moved his feathers and fanned us, declaring *qui lugent*[4] to be blessed, for they shall have their souls possessed of consolation.

'What ails thee that thou keepst gazing on the ground?' my Guide began to me when we had both climbed a little above the angel; and I: 'With such misgiving a new vision makes me go, which bends me so to itself that I cannot give up thinking of it.'

'Thou sawest' he said 'that ancient witch who alone is now wept for above us; thou sawest how man is freed from her. Let it suffice thee, and strike thy heels on the ground. Turn thine eyes to the lure which the Eternal King spins with the great wheels.'

Like the falcon which looks first to its feet, then turns to the call and stretches forward through the desire for food that draws it there, such I became,

and such, as far as the rock is cloven to make a way for the ascent, I went on to where the circuit is taken.

When I had come out in the open on the fifth round I saw people along it who were weeping, all lying face downward on the ground. '*Adhaesit pavimento anima mea*'[5] I heard them say with sighs so deep that the words could hardly be distinguished.

'O elect of God, whose sufferings both justice and hope make less hard, direct us to the next stairway.' 'If you come exempt from lying prostrate and would find the way most quickly let your right hand be always on the outside.' Thus the Poet asked and thus came the answer from a little way ahead, so that I made out by his speech the other who was hidden and I turned my eyes on the eyes of my Lord; at which he assented with a glad sign to that which my look of desire had asked. When I was free to act as I wished I drew forward above that soul whose words had first made me note him, saying: 'Spirit in whom weeping ripens that without which can be no return to God, stay awhile for me thy greater care. Who thou wast and why you have your backs turned upward, tell me, and whether thou wilt have me gain aught for thee yonder whence I set out alive.'

And he said to me: 'Why heaven turns our backs to itself thou shalt know, but first *scias quod ego fui successor Petri*.[6] Between Sestri and Chiavari pours down a fair stream and from its name the title of my blood makes its boast.[7] A month and little more I proved how the great mantle weighs on him that keeps it from the mire, so that all other burdens seem a feather. My conversion, alas,

was late, but when I was made Roman Shepherd I discovered how lying is life. I saw that there the heart was not at rest; nor was it possible to mount higher in that life, so that love of this was kindled in me. Till that moment I was a soul wretched and separate from God, wholly avaricious. Now, as thou seest, I am here punished for it. What avarice does is here declared for the purging of the converted souls, and the mountain has no bitterer pain. Just as our eyes, fixed on earthly things, did not lift themselves on high, so justice here has sunk them to the earth; as avarice quenched all our love of good so that our labours were vain, so justice here holds us fast, seized and bound in feet and hands, and as long as it shall please the righteous Lord so long shall we stay motionless and outstretched.'

I had kneeled and was about to speak; but as soon as I began and he perceived, merely by listening, that I did him reverence, 'What cause' he said 'has bent thee down thus?' And I said to him: 'Because of your[8] dignity my conscience stung me, standing erect.'

'Straighten thy legs, rise up, brother,' he replied 'do not err; I am a fellow-servant with thee and with the others of one Potentate.[9] If ever thou didst understand that holy gospel word which says "*Neque nubent*",[10] thou mayst well see why I reason thus. Go thy way now. I would not have thee stop longer, for thy stay hinders my weeping with which I ripen that which thou hast spoken of. A niece I have yonder who is named Alagia,[11] good in herself if indeed our house do not by example make her wicked, and she alone is left to me yonder.'

CANTO XX

Examples of generosity; Hugh Capet and the Capetian Dynasty; examples of avarice; the earthquake and the Gloria in excelsis

WILL strives ill with better will; therefore to please him against my pleasure I drew the sponge unfilled from the water. I moved on; and my Leader made his way, keeping to the parts left free alongside the rock as one goes on a wall close to the battlements, for the people who pour from their eyes, drop by drop, the evil that fills all the world came too near the edge on the other side. Accursed be thou, ancient wolf, who hast more prey than all the other beasts for thy hunger which is bottomless! O heavens, by whose wheeling men seem to believe their conditions are changed here below, when will he come before whom she shall flee?

We went on with steps slow and short and I was intent on the shades, hearing their pitiful weeping and lamentation, and by chance I heard one ahead of us call through his tears: 'Sweet Mary!' even as a woman does who is in travail, and going on: 'How poor thou wast may be seen from that hostelry where thou didst lay down thy holy burden.'[1] After that I heard: 'O good Fabricius, thou chosest for thy possessions virtue with poverty rather than great riches with wickedness.'[2]

These words so pleased me that I pressed forward to have knowledge of that spirit from whom they seemed to come, and he went on to tell of the bounty which Nicholas showed to the maidens to guide their youth to honour.[3]

'O soul that speakest of such goodness, tell me who thou wast' I said 'and why thou alone renewest these merited praises. Thy words shall not be without reward if I return to finish the short road of that life which flies to its end.'

And he: 'I will tell thee, not for any comfort I expect from yonder but because so great grace shines in thee before thy death. I was the root of the evil tree which overshadows all Christendom so that good fruit is rarely gathered there; but if Douai, Lille, Ghent, and Bruges had power there would soon be vengeance on it, and this I beg from Him who judges all. I was called Hugh Capet yonder.[4] Of me were born the Philips and Louis by whom of late France is ruled. I was the son of a butcher of Paris. When the ancient kings had failed, all but one, a grey-clad monk, I found firm in my hands the reins of the government of the kingdom and such new-gained power and friends in such abundance that to the widowed crown my son's head was advanced, from whom began their consecrated bones.[5] So long as the great dowry of Provence had not deprived my blood of shame it was of small account but at least did no harm; then with force and fraud began its rapine and after, for amends, it took Ponthieu and Normandy and Gascony;

Charles came into Italy and, for amends, made a victim of Conradin, and then, for amends, drove Thomas back to heaven.[6] I see a time, not long from now, which brings another Charles out of France[7] to make both him and his people better known; he comes forth unarmed and only with the lance with which Judas jousted, and so couches it that he bursts the paunch of Florence; from this he shall gain, not land, but sin and shame, so much the heavier for him the lighter he reckons such disgrace. The other, who once went forth a prisoner from his ship, I see selling his daughter and bargaining over her as pirates do with other slave-women.[8] O avarice, what more canst thou do to us, since thou hast so drawn my blood to thyself that it has no care for its own flesh? That past and future ill may seem less, I see the fleur-de-lis enter Anagni and in His Vicar Christ made captive; I see Him mocked a second time; I see renewed the vinegar and the gall and Him slain between living thieves; I see the new Pilate so ruthless that this does not sate him, but without law he bears into the Temple his greedy sails.[9] O my Lord, when shall I rejoice to see the vengeance which, hid in Thy secret counsel, makes sweet Thy wrath?[10]

'That which I said of that only bride of the Holy Ghost[11] and which made thee turn to me for some comment is, so long as day lasts, the response in all our prayers, but when night falls we take up instead an opposite strain. We recall then Pygmalion, whom ravenous lust for gold made traitor and thief and parricide, and the misery of

the avaricious Midas which followed on his inordinate demand that must always be a thing for laughter; each then remembers the foolish Achan, how he stole the spoils, so that the wrath of Joshua seems to sting him here again; then we accuse Sapphira with her husband; we celebrate the kicks that Heliodorus bore; and in infamy the name of Polymnestor, who slew Polydorus, circles all the mountain; last, the cry is: "Tell us, Crassus, for thou knowest, what is the taste of gold?"[12] Sometimes one speaks loud and another low, according to the ardour that spurs our speech with greater or less force; therefore in talking of goodness, as we do here by day, I was not alone just now, but near this no other soul raised his voice.'

We were already parted from him and were striving to get over the ground as fast as we were able, when I felt the mountain shake like a thing that is falling; at which a chill seized me such as seizes one that goes to his death. Assuredly Delos was not shaken so hard before Latona made her nest there to give birth to the two eyes of heaven.[13] Then began on all sides such a shout that the Master drew close to me, saying: 'Do not fear while I guide thee.' '*Gloria in excelsis Deo*'[14] were the words of all, by what I made out from those near, where the cry could be understood. We stood motionless and in suspense, like the shepherds who first heard that song, until it was ended and the trembling ceased; then we took again our sacred path, looking at the shades that lay on the ground having returned now to

their accustomed weeping. Never did ignorance so strive in me making me eager to know, if my memory does not err, than I felt it do then in my thought, nor, for our haste, did I dare ask nor could of myself see anything there. So I went on timid and thoughtful.

CANTO XXI

Statius; the completion of his penance; his greeting of Virgil

THE natural thirst which is never quenched but with the water which the woman of Samaria begged as a boon[1] was tormenting me and our haste was urging me along the encumbered way behind my Leader and I was grieving over the just vengeance; and lo, as Luke writes for us that Christ, new-risen from the sepulchral cave, appeared to the two who were in the way,[2] a shade appeared to us, and he came behind us while we were watching the crowd that lay at our feet, and we were not aware of him till he first spoke and said: 'O my brothers, God give you peace.'

We turned quickly and Virgil answered him with the sign suited to his greeting, then began: 'May the faithful court which holds me in eternal exile bring thee in peace to the assembly of the blest.'

'How,' he said, and meanwhile we went on speedily, 'if you are shades whom God above does not count worthy, who has brought you so far on His stairway?'

And my Teacher said: 'If thou look at the marks which this man bears and which are traced by the angel, thou shalt see plainly that he must reign with the righteous. But since she that spins day and night had not yet drawn off for him the flax which Clotho loads and packs for each on the distaff,[3] his soul, which is thy sister and mine, could not make the ascent alone, because it does not see in our

fashion. I, therefore, was drawn forth from the wide throat of Hell for his guidance and I shall guide him as much farther as my school can bring him. But tell us, if thou canst, why the mountain made such quaking just now and why all seemed to shout at once, down to its watery base.'

By his question he so threaded the needle of my desire that with the very hope he made my thirst less parching, and the other began: 'The holy rule of the mountain suffers nothing that is without order or contrary to custom. This place is free from all change. From that which heaven receives from itself to itself[4] there may be occasion of change, and from nothing else, so that neither rain nor hail nor snow nor dew nor hoar-frost falls above the short stairway of three steps. Clouds dense or rare do not appear, nor lightning-flash, nor Thaumas's daughter who often shifts her region yonder,[5] nor does dry vapour[6] rise beyond the highest of the three steps I speak of where Peter's Vicar sets his feet. Lower down, perchance, it trembles much or little, but from the wind that is hid in the earth it has never, I know not how, trembled here above; here it trembles when some soul feels itself pure so that it may rise or set out for the ascent, and that shout follows. Of its purity the will alone gives proof, and the soul, wholly free to change its convent, it takes by surprise and by willing avails for it. It wills indeed before, but the desire consents not which the Divine Justice, against the will, sets to the torment as it was once set to the sin.[7] And I, who have lain in this pain five hundred years and more, felt but now my will free for a better threshold, therefore

thou didst feel the earthquake and hear the devout spirits through the mountain render praises to the Lord—soon may He send them above!' He spoke thus to us, and since the draught is more enjoyed the greater the thirst I cannot tell how much he profited me.

And the wise Leader said: 'I see now the net which here entangles you and how you are released, why it trembles here and at what you rejoice together. Now be pleased to make me know who thou wast and let me gather from thine own words why thou hast lain here so many centuries.'

'In the time when the good Titus, by help of the King Most High, avenged the wounds from which poured the blood sold by Judas'[8] replied that spirit 'I bore yonder the name that most endures and honours most,[9] famous indeed, but still without faith. So sweet was my spirit of song that Rome drew me, a Toulousan, to itself and there I was worthy to have my brows adorned with myrtle. Men yonder still speak my name, which is Statius;[10] and I sang of Thebes and then of great Achilles, but fell by the way with the second burden. The sparks that kindled the fire in me were from the divine flame from which more than a thousand have been lit—I mean the *Aeneid*, which was in poetry my mother and my nurse; without it I had not weighed a drachm, and to have lived yonder when Virgil lived I would have consented to a sun more than I was due before coming forth from banishment.'

These words turned Virgil to me with a look that said in silence: 'Be silent.' But the power to will cannot do all, for laughter and tears are so close followers on the passions from which they spring that they least follow the will in the most

truthful. I only smiled, like one that gives a hint; at which the shade was silent and looked into my eyes, where the expression most holds its place, and said: 'So may thy great labour end in good, why did thy face just now show me a gleam of mirth?'

Now I am held on the one side and the other, the one makes me keep silence, the other conjures me to speak, so that I sigh and am understood by my Master, and 'Do not fear to speak', he says to me 'but speak and tell him what he asks so eagerly.'

I therefore: 'Thou wonderest, perhaps, ancient spirit, at my smiling, but I would have greater wonder seize thee. He that directs my eyes on high is that Virgil from whom thou didst take power to sing of men and gods; if thou didst suppose another reason for my smile, put it away as untrue and believe it was those words thou didst speak of him.'

Already he was bending to embrace my Teacher's feet; but he said to him: 'Brother, do not so, for thou art a shade and a shade thou seest.'

And he, rising: 'Now thou canst understand the measure of the love that burns in me for thee, when I forget our emptiness and treat shades as solid things.'

CANTO XXII

Statius's indebtedness to Virgil and his conversion; the Sixth Terrace; the purgation of gluttony; examples of temperance

Now the angel who had directed us to the sixth circle was left behind us, having erased a scar from my face, and he had declared to us that they whose desire is for righteousness are blessed, his words completing this with *sitiunt* and without the rest.[1] And I was going on lighter than at the other passages so that I followed the swift spirits up without any labour, when Virgil began: 'Love kindled by virtue always kindles another, if only its flame appear without; from the hour, therefore, when Juvenal descended among us in the Limbo of Hell and made thy affection known to me[2] my goodwill toward thee was as great as ever held anyone for a person not seen, so that now these stairs will seem short to me. But tell me—and as a friend forgive me if with too much assurance I slacken the rein, and as a friend speak with me now—how could avarice find a place in thy breast along with so much wisdom as by thy zeal thou wast filled with?'

These words first made Statius begin to smile a little, then he replied: 'Every word of thine is a dear token to me of thy love; but in truth things often so appear, because their true cause is hid, that they give false matter for perplexity. Thy

question makes plain to me thy belief that I was avaricious in the other life, doubtless because of that circle where I was; know then that avarice was too far removed from me, and this excess thousands of moons have punished. And had it not been that I corrected my ways when I understood the lines where, as if enraged at human nature, thou didst cry: "To what, O cursed hunger for gold, dost thou not drive the appetite of mortals?",[3] I should be rolling the weights and know the dismal jousts. Then I learned that our hands can spread their wings too wide in spending and I repented of that as of my other sins. How many will rise again with scant locks[4] through ignorance, which takes away repentance of this sin in life and in the last hour! Know, too, that the fault which runs counter to any sin in direct opposition is here, along with it, withered of its green; therefore if I have been for my purging among these people who weep for avarice it is for the contrary this has befallen me.'

'Now, when thou didst sing the cruel arms of the double woe of Jocasta'[5] said the singer of the *Bucolics* 'it does not appear by the notes which Clio[6] touches with thee there that the faith yet made thee faithful without which well-doing is not enough.[7] If that is so, what sun or what candles[8] dispelled thy darkness so that thereafter thou didst lift thy sails behind the fisherman?'

And the other answered him: 'Thou first directedst me to Parnassus to drink in its caves, and first, after God, enlightenedst me. Thou didst like him that goes by night and carries the light behind him and does not help himself but makes wise

those that follow, when thou saidst: "The age turns new again; justice comes back and the primal years of men, and a new race descends from heaven." Through thee I was poet, through thee Christian; but, that thou mayst see better what I outline, I shall set my hand to colour it. Already the world was everywhere big with the true faith, sown by the messengers of the eternal kingdom, and thy words I have just spoken were so in accord with the new preachers that I formed the habit of visiting them. They came then to seem to me so holy that when Domitian persecuted them their weeping did not lack my tears and while I remained yonder I succoured them and their upright ways made me despise all other sects. Then before I had brought the Greeks to the rivers of Thebes in my verse I received baptism; but, for fear, I was a hidden Christian long making show of paganism, and this lukewarmness made me circle the fourth circle for more than four centuries. Thou, then, who hast lifted the veil that concealed from me the great good I speak of, tell me, while we still have time on the ascent, where is our ancient Terence, Cecilius and Plautus and Varius,[9] if thou knowest; tell me if they are lost and in what quarter.'

'These and Persius and I and many others' replied my Leader 'are with that Greek whom the Muses suckled more than any other,[10] in the first circle of the blind prison; very often we talk of the mountain that has always with it those that nursed us. Euripides is there with us and Antiphon, Simonides and Agathon and many other Greeks who once adorned their brows with

laurel. Of thy people[11] are seen there Antigone, Deiphyle and Argia and Ismene, sad still as she was; she that showed Langia is seen there; there is the daughter of Tiresias, and Thetis and Deidamia with her sisters.'

Both the Poets were now silent, intent again on looking about them, being freed from the ascent and the walls, and already the four handmaids of the day were left behind and the fifth was at the shaft, directing still upward its burning horn,[12] when my Leader said: 'I think we must turn our right shoulders to the edge and circle the mountain as we are accustomed.'

Thus use was our instruction there, and we took our way with less uncertainty because of the assent of that elect soul. They went in front and I by myself behind listening to their talk, which gave me understanding in making verse. But soon their pleasant converse was broken by a tree which we found in the middle of the way, with fruits that smelled sweet and good, and as a fir tapers upwards from branch to branch so it did downwards, I think so that no one should climb it. On the side where our way was bounded there fell from the high rock clear water which was dispersed above among the leaves. The two Poets approached the tree and a voice from among the boughs cried: 'You may not eat of this food'; then said: 'Mary had more thought that the marriage-feast should be honourable and complete than for her own mouth which now answers for you,[13] and the Roman women of old were content with water for their drink, and Daniel despised food and gained

wisdom.[14] The first age was beautiful as gold; it made acorns savoury with hunger and with thirst made nectar of every brook. Honey and locusts were the viands that nourished the Baptist in the desert, for which he is glorious and as great as by the Gospel he is declared to you.'[15]

CANTO XXIII

The wasted forms of the penitents; Forese Donati; his warning to the women of Florence

WHILE I strained my eyes through the green foliage, as he sometimes does who wastes his life after the birds,[1] my more than father said to me: 'Son, come on now, for the time appointed us must be put to better use.'

I turned my face, and my steps not less quickly, after the sages, who were talking so that they made the going of no cost to me, and lo, '*Labia mea, Domine*,'[2] we heard wept and sung in tones that brought delight and grief.

'O sweet Father, what is that I hear?' I began; and he: 'Shades, perhaps, that go loosing the knot of their debt.'

Just as travellers absorbed in thought, when they overtake strangers on the road, turn to them without stopping, so, coming behind us with more speed and passing on, a crowd of souls, silent and devout, gazed at us with wonder. Each was dark and hollow in the eyes, pallid in face, and so wasted that the skin took shape from the bones; I do not believe that Erysicthon had become so withered to the very rind by hunger when he had most fear of it.[3] I said to myself in thought: 'See the people who lost Jerusalem when Mary preyed on her child!'[4] The eye-pits were like rings without

the gem. He that reads *OMO* in men's faces might easily have made out the *M* there.[5] Who, not knowing the reason, would believe that the odour of fruit and of water, by the craving it caused, would operate so?

I was now wondering what so famished them, the cause of their leanness and wretched scurf being still unknown to me, when lo, from the depth of the head a shade turned his eyes on me and looked steadily, then cried aloud: 'What a favour is this to me!' I should never have known him again by his looks, but in his voice was plain to me that which was destroyed in his aspect; that spark rekindled in me all my knowledge of the changed features and I recognized the face of Forese.[6]

'Ah,' he begged 'do not set thy mind on the withered scab that discolours my skin nor on this lack of flesh in me, but tell me the truth about thyself and who these two souls are there that give thee escort. Do not delay to speak to me.'

'Thy face which once I wept for dead' I answered him 'now gives me no less cause for tears, seeing it so disfigured; therefore tell me, in God's name, what so wastes you. Do not make me speak while I am marvelling, for he can ill speak whose mind is full of something else.'

And he said to me: 'From the eternal counsel virtue descends into the water and into the tree left behind us, by which I am made thus lean; all these people who weep as they sing, having followed their appetite beyond measure, regain here in hunger and thirst their holiness. The fragrance which comes from the fruit and from the spray that is dispersed over its verdure kindles

in us the craving to eat and drink, and not once only our pain is renewed as we go round this level; I say pain and ought to say solace, for that will leads us to the tree which led Christ gladly to say *Eli*, when with His own veins He freed us.'[7]

And I said to him: 'Forese, from that day when thou didst exchange the world for a better life not five years have revolved till now, and if the power to sin more ended for thee before the hour arrived of the good grief that weds us again to God, how art thou come up here already? I thought to find thee down below, where time is made good by time.'

Then he said to me: 'It is my Nella that has brought me so soon to drink the sweet wormwood of the torments; by her flood of tears, by her devout prayers and sighs, she has drawn me from the slope where they wait and has set me free from the other circles. So much more precious to God and more beloved is my widow, whom I greatly loved, as she is more alone in well-doing; for the Barbagia of Sardinia is far modester in its women than the Barbagia where I left her.[8] O sweet brother, what wilt thou have me say? A coming time is already before my eyes to which this hour will not be very old when from the pulpit it shall be forbidden to the brazen women of Florence to go showing the breast with the paps. What barbarous women, what Saracens, ever were there that needed, to make them go covered, spiritual disciplines or any other? But had the shameless creatures knowledge of what the swift heavens prepare for them, they would have their mouths open already for howling; for if our foresight here

does not deceive me they shall be sorrowful before he has hair on his cheeks who now is soothed with lullabies.[9] Pray, brother, do not longer hide thy story from me; thou seest that not only I but all these people are gazing where thou veilest the sun.'

On that I said to him: 'If thou bring back to mind what thou wast with me and I with thee, the present memory will be grievous still. He that goes before me turned me from that life some days ago, when the sister of him'—and I pointed to the sun—'showed herself round to you. It is he that has led me through the profound night of the truly dead with this true flesh that follows him; his succours have drawn me up thence, climbing and circling the mountain which straightens you whom the world made crooked. So long he says he will bear me company till I shall be where Beatrice is; there I must be left without him. It is Virgil who speaks thus to me'—and I pointed to him—'and this other is the shade for whom your kingdom shook all its slopes just now, discharging him from itself.'

CANTO XXIV

Bonagiunta; 'the sweet new style'; the second tree; examples of gluttony; the angel of temperance

NEITHER did the talk make the going, nor the going it, more slow and, conversing, we went on quickly like a ship driven by a fair wind; and the shades, that seemed things twice dead, drew in through the pits of their eyes amazement at me, perceiving that I was alive. And I, continuing my talk, said: 'He goes up, perhaps, more slowly than he would, because of the other. But tell me, if thou canst, where is Piccarda.[1] Tell me if I see any person to be noted among these people who are gazing at me so.'

'My sister, of whom I know not if she was more fair or good, already triumphs in high Olympus, rejoicing in her crown.' This he said first, and then: 'Here it is not forbidden to name any, our features are so drained away by the fast. He there' —and he pointed with his finger—'is Bonagiunta, Bonagiunta of Lucca,[2] and that one beyond him, the face more seamed than the rest, had Holy Church in his arms; he is from Tours and purges by fasting the eels of Bolsena and the Vernaccian.'[3]

Many others he named to me one by one, and all seemed glad to be named so that I did not see a dark look on account of it. I saw, for hunger plying his teeth on vacancy, Ubaldin dalla Pila, and Bonifazio, who pastured many flocks with his

staff[4]; I saw Messer Marchese, who once had leisure for drinking at Forlì with less drouth, yet was such that he never felt satisfied.[5] But as one looks and then takes more note of one than of another so I did with him of Lucca, who seemed more desirous to know me. He was muttering and something like *Gentucca*[6] I heard at the place where he was feeling the stroke of justice that so consumes them.[7]

'O soul' I said 'that seemst so eager to speak with me, pray let me hear thee plainly and satisfy both thyself and me with thy speech.'

'A woman is born and does not yet wear the wimple'[8] he began 'who shall make my city pleasing to thee, however men revile it; with this presage thou shalt go thy way, and if thou take a wrong sense from my muttering the facts themselves will yet make it clear to thee. But tell me if I see here him that brought forth the new rhymes, beginning with *Ladies that have intelligence of love.*'

And I said to him: 'I am one who, when love breathes in me, take note, and in that manner which he dictates within go on to set it forth.'

'O brother,' he said 'now I see the knot that held back the Notary[9] and Guittone[10] and me short of the sweet new style that I hear; I see well how your pens follow close behind the dictator, which assuredly did not happen with ours, and he that sets himself to examine further sees nothing else between the one style and the other.' And, as if satisfied, he was silent.

As birds that winter along the Nile sometimes make a troop in the air, then fly with more speed and go in file, so all the people that were there, facing round, quickened their steps, being light both with leanness and desire; and as one tired

with running lets his companions go on and then walks till the heaving of his chest is relieved, so Forese let the holy flock pass and came on with me behind, saying: 'How long will it be till I see thee again?'

'I know not' I answered him 'how long I shall live; but truly my return will not be so soon that in desire I shall not be sooner at the shore, for the place where I have been put to live strips itself of good day by day and seems destined to woeful ruin.'

'It is true,' he said 'and I see him who has most blame for it dragged at the tail of a beast towards the valley where there is no absolving; the beast goes faster at every step, still gaining speed, till it dashes him down and leaves the body vilely undone.[11] Not long have those wheels to turn'—and he raised his eyes to the sky—'till that shall be plain to thee which my speech cannot more plainly tell. Do thou remain now, for time is precious in this realm and I lose too much coming thus along with thee.'

As sometimes a horseman comes forth at a gallop from a troop of riders and goes to gain for himself the honour of the first encounter, so he parted from us with greater strides, and I remained on the way with these two who were so great captains of the world.

And when he had passed on ahead of us so that my eyes were left in pursuit of him as my mind of his words, there appeared to me the branches of another tree, loaded and verdant and not far off, for we had just then come round there. I saw people beneath it lifting up their hands and crying I knew not what towards the foliage, like eager

and thoughtless children who beg and he they beg of does not answer, but, to make their desire keener, holds up the thing they want and does not hide it. Then they went away as if undeceived, and we came presently to the great tree which refuses so many prayers and tears. 'Pass on without coming close; a tree is above that was eaten of by Eve[12] and this plant was raised from it.' So someone spoke among the leaves, at which Virgil and Statius and I, drawing close together, went on at the side where the cliff rises. 'Remember' he said 'the accursed creatures, formed in the clouds, who, when gorged, fought Theseus with their double breasts,[13] and the Hebrews who at the drinking showed themselves soft, so that Gideon would not have them in his company when they went down the hills against Midian.'[14] Thus keeping close to the one side of the way we passed on, hearing of sins of gluttony followed of old by wretched wages; then, spread out on the lonely road, a thousand steps and more brought us on, each in meditation without speech.

'What are you thinking on as you go, you three by yourselves?' said a sudden voice; at which I started, as do scared and timid beasts. I raised my head to see who it was, and never in furnace was glass or metal seen so glowing red as I saw one who said: 'If you wish to mount above, here you must make the turn. This way he goes who would go for peace.' His aspect had taken my sight from me, so that I turned after my teachers as one that goes by his hearing. And as the breeze of May, herald of the dawn, stirs and gives fragrance, being all impregnate with the grass and flowers, such a

wind I felt strike full on my brow and I plainly felt the moving of his wing, which made me feel the odour of ambrosia; and I heard the words: 'Blessed are they whom so much grace illumines that appetite does not fill their breast with the fumes of too great desire, hungering always so far as is just.'[15]

CANTO XXV

The generation of the body and creation of the soul; the Seventh Terrace; the purgation of lust; examples of chastity

IT was an hour when the ascent brooked no delay, for the sun had left to the Bull, and night to the Scorpion, the meridian circle;[1] therefore, like him that does not stop but keeps on his way whatever may appear to him, if he is pricked by the goad of necessity, we entered by the gap, one before the other taking the stair which by its narrowness separates the climbers. And as the little stork lifts its wing with desire to fly and does not venture to leave the nest and drops it again, such was I with the desire to question kindled and quenched, going as far as the movement of one that prepares to speak. My gentle Father did not, for all the speed of our going, refrain, but said: 'Loose the bow of thy speech that thou hast drawn to the iron.'

Then, having confidence, I opened my mouth and began: 'How is it possible to become lean where there is no need of nourishment?'

'If thou call to mind how Meleager was consumed in the consuming of a brand'[2] he said 'this will not be so difficult for thee; and if thou consider how with your least movement your image moves within the glass, that which seems hard to

thee will seem easy. But, that thou mayst be set at rest in thy desire, here is Statius, and I call him and beg of him now to be healer of thy wounds.'

'If I unfold to him in thy presence the things seen in the eternal life,' Statius replied 'let it be my excuse that I cannot refuse thee.' Then he began: 'Son, if thy mind heed and receive my words they will enlighten thee how this can be. Perfect blood, which is never drunk by the thirsty veins and is left like food thou removest from the table, takes in the heart informing power for all the bodily members, like that which takes its course through the veins to become these.[3] Further digested, it descends where silence is fitter than speech and thence drops afterwards on another's blood in the natural vessel. There the one mingles with the other, the one fitted to be passive and the other, on account of the perfect place from which it springs, active, and this, so united, begins to operate, first coagulating, then quickening that to which, for its material, it has given consistency.[4] The active force having become a soul, like a plant's but so far different that it is on the way and the other already at the shore, then operates to the point that now it moves and feels, like a sea-fungus, and from that goes on to produce organs for the faculties of which it is the seed.[5] Now, my son, develops and spreads the force that is from the heart of the begetter, where nature makes provision for all the members. But how from animal it becomes a child thou seest not yet; this is the point which once made a wiser than thou to err, so that in his teaching he made the possible intellect separate from the soul, because he did not see an organ

appropriated by it.[6] Open thy breast to the truth that follows and know that as soon as the articulation of the brain is perfected in the embryo the First Mover turns to it, rejoicing over such handiwork of nature, and breathes into it a new spirit full of power, which draws into its own substance that which it finds active there and becomes a single soul that lives and feels and itself revolves upon itself.[7] And, that thou mayst wonder less at my words, consider the sun's heat which becomes wine when it is joined to the juice that pours from the vine. When Lachesis has no more flax[8] the soul is loosed from the flesh and carries with it potentially both the human and the divine faculties—all the others mute, memory, intelligence and will in action and far keener than before. Without pausing it falls, marvellously, of itself, to one of the shores.[9] There it first comes to know its course. As soon as space envelops it there the formative virtue radiates round about, in form and measure as in the living members; and as the air, when it is full of rain, becomes adorned with various colours through another's beams that are reflected in it, so the neighbouring air sets itself into that form which the soul that stopped there stamps upon it by its power, and then, like the flame that follows the fire wherever it shifts, its new form follows the spirit. Since it has by this its semblance henceforth, it is called a shade, and by this it then makes organs for every sense, even to sight; by this we speak and by this smile, by this we shed tears and make the sighs thou mayst have heard on the mountain. According as

desires and other affections impress us the shade takes form, and this is the cause of that at which thou marvellest.'

And now we had come to the last circuit and had turned to the right and were intent on another care. There the bank shoots forth flames and the edge of the terrace sends a blast upwards which bends them back and keeps them away from it, so that we had to go on the open side, one by one, and I feared the fire on this hand and on that feared to fall below.

My Leader said: 'Along this way the rein must be kept tight on the eyes, for it would be easy to err.'

'*Summae Deus clementiae*'[10] I then heard sung in the heart of the great burning, which made me not less eager to turn, and I saw spirits walking through the flames, so that I kept looking at them and at my steps, dividing my glance from time to time. After that hymn was sung to the end they cried aloud: 'I know not a man',[11] then softly began the hymn again; when it was finished they cried next: 'Diana kept to the woods and drove out Helice, who had felt the poison of Venus';[12] then they returned to the singing, then cried out of wives and husbands who were chaste as virtuous wedlock requires of us; and this fashion lasts with them, I think, all the time the fire burns them. With such treatment and with such fare must the last wound of all be healed.

CANTO XXVI

Dante's shadow on the flames; examples of lust; Guinicelli; Arnaut

WHILE we went thus along the edge one before the other, the good Master often saying to me: 'Watch, take heed of my warning', the sun was striking on my right shoulder;[1] for now its beams were changing the whole face of the west from azure to white and with my shadow I made the flame appear more glowing, and even at that faint sign I saw many of the shades, as they went, give heed. It was this that first gave occasion for them to speak of me and they began to say to each other: 'This man does not seem unreal flesh'; then some of them came as near to me as they could, always with care not to come out where they would not be burned.

'O thou that goest behind the others, not from tardiness but perhaps from reverence, answer me who burn with thirst and with the fire; it is not only I that crave an answer from thee, but all these are thirstier for it than Indian or Ethiopian for cold water. Tell us, how it is that thou makest a wall of thyself to the sun, even as if thou hadst not yet entered into death's net?'

Thus one of them spoke to me, and now I would have made myself known if I had not been intent on another strange thing that appeared then: for in the middle of the blazing path came people facing opposite to these, who held me gazing in

suspense. I see there every shade on either side make haste and kiss another, not stopping, content with brief greeting; so within their dark troop one ant touches muzzle with the other, perhaps to enquire of their way and fortune. As soon as they end the friendly salutation, before taking the first step to pass on, each tries to outcry the rest—the new people: 'Sodom and Gomorrah!'[2] and the others: 'Pasiphae enters the cow that the bull may run to her lust.'[3] Then, like cranes flying, some towards the Riphean Mountains and some towards the sands,[4] these shunning the frost and those the sun, the one crowd goes and the other comes on, and they return with tears to their former chants and to the cry that most befits them. And the same who entreated me come close to me as before, by their looks eager to listen.

I, having twice seen their desire, began: 'O souls secure of gaining, whensoever it be, a state of peace, my members are not left yonder green or ripe but are here with me, with their blood and their joints. I go up hence not to be longer blind. A lady is above who gains grace for me by which I bring my mortal part through your world. But —so may your greatest longing soon be satisfied and that heaven lodge you which is full of love and has the widest reach[5]—tell me, that I may yet note it on my page, who are you and what is that crowd that goes away behind you?'

Not less bewildered and amazed is the mountaineer, gazing about him speechless when rude and rustic he enters the city, than was each shade

in his looks; but when they were relieved of their amazement, which is quickly subdued in lofty hearts: 'Blessed art thou,' he began again that had questioned me before, 'who, to die better, takest freight of experience from our bounds! The people who do not come with us offended in that for which Caesar in a triumph once heard them call "*Regina*" against him,[6] therefore they go off crying "*Sodom*", as thou hast heard, in self-reproach and by their shame they aid the burning. Our sin was hermaphrodite;[7] but because we observed not human law, following appetite like beasts, we repeat at parting, to our disgrace, her name who made herself a beast in the beast-like timber. Now thou knowest our deeds and of what we were guilty. If, perchance, thou wouldst know who we are by name, there is no time to tell and I should not be able. About myself, indeed, I will satisfy thy wish. I am Guido Guinicelli,[8] and I make my purgation already because of my good sorrowing before the end.'

Such as, in the grief of Lycurgus, the two sons became on seeing their mother again,[9] I became, but with more restraint, when I heard speak his own name the father of me and of others my betters, whoever have used sweet and graceful rhymes of love, and without hearing or speech I went on a long way in thought gazing at him, and did not, for the fire, go nearer him. When I had fed my sight on him I offered myself wholly ready at his service, with the assurance that gains belief.

And he said to me: 'Thou leavest such a trace and so clear in me by that which I hear thee tell as Lethe cannot destroy or dim; but if thy words

have now sworn truth, tell me for what cause thou showest thyself, by speech and look, to hold me dear.'

And I to him: 'Those sweet lines of yours,[10] which so long as the modern use[11] shall last will make their ink still dear.'

'O brother,' he said 'he there whom I point out to thee'—and he pointed to a spirit ahead—'was a better craftsman of the mother tongue; verses of love and tales of romance, he surpassed them all, and let the fools talk who think that he of Limoges excels. They give heed to reputation more than truth and thus settle their opinion before listening to art or reason; so did many of old with Guittone, from cry to cry giving praise to him only, until with most the truth has prevailed.[12] Now, if thou hast such ample privilege that it is permitted thee to go to the cloister in which Christ is abbot of the brotherhood, do thou say to Him a Paternoster for me, so far as is needful for us of this world where the power to sin is no longer ours.[13]

Then, perhaps to give place to others who were near him, he disappeared through the fire as through the water a fish goes to the bottom.

I put myself forward a little towards him that had been pointed out and said that my desire offered a place of welcome for his name, and he readily began to speak:[14] 'So much does your courteous question please me that I neither can nor would conceal myself from you. I am Arnaut, who weep and sing as I go. I see with grief past follies and see, rejoicing, the day I hope for before me. Now I beg of you, by that goodness which guides you to the summit of the stairway, to take thought in due time for my pain.' Then he hid himself in the fire that refines them.

CANTO XXVII

The angel of chastity; the passage through the fire; the dream of Leah; Virgil's last speech

As when it shoots the first rays where its Maker shed His blood, the Ebro lying under the lofty Scales and the waters of the Ganges scorched by noon, so stood the sun;[1] the day, therefore, was departing when God's glad angel appeared to us. He stood outside the flames on the terrace and sang '*Beati mundo corde*'[2] with a voice far clearer than ours; then: 'There is no way farther, holy souls, unless first the fire's sting is felt; enter into it and be not deaf to the singing beyond' he said to us when we were near him, so that I became, when I heard him, like one that is laid in the grave. I stretched up my clasped hands, gazing at the fire and strongly imagining bodies I once saw burned.

The good escorts turned to me and Virgil said: 'My son, here may be torment, but not death. Remember, remember; and if even on Geryon I brought thee safely, what shall I do now nearer to God? Be well assured that didst thou stay in the heart of this flame a thousand years it could not touch a hair of thy head; and if thou think, perhaps, that I deceive thee, go close to it and try it with thine own hands on the edge of thy garment. Put

away, henceforth, put away every fear, turn hither, come and enter with confidence.' And I stood still, though against my conscience.

When he saw me remain standing stubborn, being troubled a little he said: 'Look now, my son, between Beatrice and thee is this wall.'

As at the name of Thisbe Pyramus lifted his eyelids at the point of death and gazed at her, at the time when the mulberry became red,[3] so, my stubbornness softened, I turned to the wise Leader, hearing the name that ever springs up in my mind; at which he shook his head and said: 'What, are we to stay on this side?', then smiled as one does at a child that is won with an apple. Then he put himself into the fire before me, asking Statius, who for a long way had been between us, to come behind.

As soon as I was in it I would have cast myself into boiling glass to cool me, so beyond measure was the burning there, and my sweet Father, to comfort me, kept talking of Beatrice as he went, saying: 'I seem to see her eyes already.' Guiding us was a voice that sang beyond, and giving all our heed to it we came forth where the ascent began. '*Venite, benedicti Patris mei*,'[4] sounded within a light that was there, such that it overcame me and I could not look at it. 'The sun departs' it continued 'and evening comes; do not stop, but hasten your steps before the west grows dark.'

The way went straight up through the rock in such a direction that I cut off before me the rays of the sun, which was now low, and we had gained only a few steps when both I and my sages perceived by the disappearance of the shadow that

the sun had set behind us; and before the horizon, in all its vast expanse, had taken one aspect and night held all her domains each of us made his bed of a step, for the nature of the mountain took from us the power rather than the desire of climbing farther.

As goats that have been quick and wanton on the heights before they fed lie mildly chewing the cud, silent in the shade while the sun is burning, watched by the shepherd who leans on his staff and tends them while he leans—and as the herdsman who lodges in the open passes the night beside his quiet flock, watching lest a beast should scatter them; such were we then all three, I like a goat and they like shepherds, shut in on the one side and the other by the high rock. Little outside could be seen there, but by that little I saw the stars both bigger and brighter than their wont.

So ruminating and so gazing at them, sleep seized me—sleep, which often has news before the event. In the hour, I think, when Cytherea,[5] who seems always burning with the fire of love, first shone on the mountain from the east, I seemed to see in a dream a lady young and beautiful going through a meadow gathering flowers and singing: 'Know, whoever asks my name, that I am Leah,[6] and I go plying my fair hands here and there to make me a garland; to please me at the glass I here adorn myself, but my sister Rachel never leaves her mirror and sits all day. She is fain to see her own fair eyes as I to adorn me with my hands. She with seeing, and I with doing am satisfied.'

And now with the splendours before dawn, which rise so much the welcomer to travellers as, returning, they lodge less far from home, the shadows were fleeing on every side and my sleep with them; therefore I rose, seeing the great masters risen already.

'That sweet fruit which the care of mortals goes to seek on so many boughs shall to-day give peace to thy cravings.' Such were Virgil's words to me, and never was there boon to give such pleasure as these. So greatly desire upon desire came to me to be above that with every step I felt then my feathers grow for flight. When all the stair was sped beneath us and we were on the topmost step Virgil fixed his eyes on me and said: 'The temporal fire and the eternal thou hast seen, my son, and art come to a part where of myself I discern no further. I have brought thee here with understanding and with skill. Take henceforth thy pleasure for guide. Thou hast come forth from the steep and the narrow ways. See the sun that shines on thy brow; see the grass, the flowers and trees which the ground here brings forth of itself alone; till the fair eyes come rejoicing which weeping made me come to thee thou mayst sit or go among them. No longer expect word or sign from me. Free, upright and whole is thy will and it were a fault not to act on its bidding; therefore over thyself I crown and mitre thee.'

CANTO XXVIII

The Earthly Paradise; the fair lady and the stream; the seeds dispersed on the earth

EAGER now to search within and about the divine forest green and dense which tempered to my eyes the new day, I left the slope without waiting longer, taking the level very slowly over the ground which gave fragrance on every side. A sweet air that was without change was striking on my brow with the force only of a gentle breeze, by which the fluttering boughs all bent freely to the part where the holy mountain throws its first shadow, yet were not so much swayed from their erectness that the little birds in the tops did not still practise all their arts, but, singing, they greeted the morning hours with full gladness among the leaves, which kept such undertone to their rhymes as gathers from branch to branch in the pine wood on the Chiassi shore when Aeolus looses the Sirocco.[1]

Already my slow steps had brought me so far within the ancient wood that I could not see the place where I had entered, and lo, my going farther was prevented by a stream which with its little waves bent leftwards the grass that sprang on its bank. All the waters that are purest here would seem to have some defilement in them beside that,

which conceals nothing though it flows quite dark under the perpetual shade which never lets sun or moon shine there.

With feet I stopped and with eyes passed over beyond the streamlet to look at the great variety of fresh-flowering boughs, and there appeared to me there, as appears of a sudden a thing that for wonder drives away every other thought, a lady all alone, who went singing and culling flower from flower with which all her way was painted.

'Pray, fair lady, who warmest thyself in love's beams, if I am to believe the looks which are wont to be testimony of the heart,' I said to her 'may it please thee to come forward to this stream so near that I may hear what thou singest. Thou makest me recall where and what was Proserpine at the time her mother lost her and she the spring.'[2]

As a lady turns in the dance with feet close together on the ground and hardly puts one foot before the other, she turned towards me on the red and yellow flowerets like a virgin that veils her modest eyes and gave satisfaction to my prayer, approaching so that the sweet sound came to me with its meaning. As soon as she was where the grass was just bathed with the waves of the beautiful river she did me the grace to lift her eyes; and I do not believe such light shone from beneath the lids of Venus when, through strange mischance, she was pierced by her son.[3] Erect, she smiled from the other bank, arranging in her hands many colours which the high land puts forth without

seed. Three paces the river kept us apart; but Hellespont where Xerxes passed, a bridle still on all men's boasts, did not bear more hatred from Leander for its swelling waters between Sestos and Abydos than that from me because it did not open then.[4]

'You are new here' she began 'and, perhaps because I smile in this place set apart to the human kind for its nest, some doubt keeps you wondering, but the psalm *Delectasti*[5] gives light that may dispel the cloud from your mind. And thou who art in front and didst make request of me, say if thou wouldst hear more, for I have come ready for all thy questions till thou art satisfied.'

'The water' I said 'and the sound of the forest contend in me with a recent belief in a thing I have heard contrary to this.'[6]

She said therefore: 'I will tell how that which makes thee marvel proceeds from its cause and I will rid thee of the cloud that has fallen on thee. The Supreme Good who does only His own pleasure made man good and for good and gave him this place for earnest of eternal peace; through his fault he had short stay here, through his fault he exchanged for tears and toil honest mirth and sweet sport. In order that the disturbance which the exhalations of land and sea make of themselves below, following the heat as far as they may, should do no injury to man, this mountain rose thus far towards heaven and stands clear of them from where it is barred. Now, since all the air revolves in a circuit with the first circling,[7] unless its revolution is interrupted at any point, that movement strikes on this height, which is all free in the living air, and makes the wood, because it is

dense, resound; and the smitten plants have such potency that with their virtue they impregnate the air, which in its circling then scatters it abroad, and the other land,[8] according to its fitness in itself and in its sky, conceives and brings forth from diverse virtues diverse growths. Were this understood it would not then seem a marvel yonder when some plant takes root without visible seed, and thou shouldst know that the holy ground where thou art is full of every seed and has in it fruit that is not plucked yonder.[9] The water thou seest does not spring from a vein which is restored by vapour that cold condenses, like a river that gains and loses force, but issues from a constant and sure fountain which by God's will regains as much as it pours forth, open on either side. On this side it flows down with virtue which takes from men the memory of sin; on the other it restores that of every good deed; here it is called Lethe and on the other side Eunoe and it does not operate here or there unless it is first tasted,—this last surpasses every other sweetness.

'And notwithstanding that thy thirst may be fully satisfied though I reveal no more to thee I will give thee also a corollary as a grace, nor do I think my words will be less welcome to thee if they reach beyond my promise. Those who in old times sang of the age of gold and of its happy state perhaps dreamed on Parnassus of this place; here the human root was innocent, here was lasting spring and every fruit, this is the nectar of which each tells.'

I turned then right round to my poets and saw that they had heard the last sentence with a smile. Then I brought my eyes back to the fair lady.

CANTO XXIX

The walk by the river; the pageant of revelation

SINGING like a lady enamoured she continued, when she had finished speaking: '*Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata!*'[1] and, like nymphs that used to wander alone through woodland shades, one choosing to see, another to avoid, the sun, she moved then against the stream, going along the bank, and I level with her accompanying the little steps with mine. We had not taken a hundred between us when the banks made an equal bend in such a way that I faced the east again, and we had not gone far that way when the lady turned quite round to me, saying: 'My brother, look and listen.' And lo, a sudden brightness swept through the great forest on all sides, such that it put me in doubt if it was lightning; but since lightning ceases as it comes and that, continuing, shone more and more, I said in my mind: 'What thing is this?' And a sweet melody ran through the shining air; at which good zeal made me blame Eve's boldness, that, where earth and heaven were obedient, a woman, alone and but then formed, she did not bear to stay under any veil,[2] under which had she been submissive I should have tasted those unspeakable delights before and for longer time.

While I went on among so many first-fruits of eternal happiness, all in suspense and desirous still of other joys, the air before us under the green boughs became like a blazing fire and the sweet sound was now heard as songs.

O most holy virgins,[3] if fastings, cold, or vigils I have ever borne for you, need drives me to ask you for reward; now must Helicon pour forth for me and Urania help me with her choir to put in verse things hard for thought.

A little way on, a false appearance of seven trees of gold was caused by the long space still intervening between us and them; but when I had come so near that the ambiguous shape which deceives the sense did not lose by distance any of its features, the faculty which provides for the discourse of reason[4] made them out as they were, candlesticks, and in the voices of the singing, 'Hosanna'. Above flamed the splendid array, far brighter than the moon in the clear midnight sky in her mid-month. I turned round full of wonder to the good Virgil and he answered me with a look no less charged with amazement; then I turned my face again to the high things, which moved towards us so slowly that they would have been outstripped by new-made brides.

The lady chid me: 'Why art thou so eager only on the sight of the living lights and givest no heed to that which comes behind them?'

I saw people then coming after them as after their leaders, clothed in white, and such whiteness never was here. The water shone on my left and, even like a mirror, gave back to me my left

side when I gazed in it. When I was at a point on my bank where only the river parted me from them, to see better I held my steps and saw the flames move forward, leaving the air behind them painted, and they had the appearance of streaming pennons, so that overhead it remained streaked with seven bands in all those colours of which the sun makes his bow and Delia her girdle.[5] These standards went back beyond my sight and, as well as I could judge, the outermost were ten paces apart. Beneath so fair a sky as I describe four and twenty elders came two and two, crowned with lilies; all sang: 'Blessed art thou among the daughters of Adam and blessed forever be thy beauty!' After the flowers and other fresh herbage opposite to me on the other bank were left clear of those elect people, as light follows light in heaven four living creatures came after them, each crowned with green leaves; every one was plumed with six wings, the plumage full of eyes, and the eyes of Argus,[6] were they alive, would be such. To describe their forms, reader, I do not waste more rhymes, for other outlay so presses on me that I cannot be lavish in this; but read Ezekiel, who depicts them as he saw them come from the cold parts with wind and cloud and fire, and as thou shalt find them on his pages such they were here, except that for the wings John is with me and departs from him.[7] The space between these four contained a triumphal car on two wheels, which came drawn at the neck of a griffin; it

stretched up the one wing and the other between the middle band and the three and three so that it did not harm any by cutting through, and they rose so high that they were lost to sight. It had its members of gold so far as it was a bird and the rest white mingled with red. Not only did Rome not gladden Africanus or Augustus himself with a car so splendid,[8] but that of the sun would be poor beside it—that of the sun, which, straying, was consumed at the devout petition of the earth, when Jove in his secret counsel was just.[9] Three ladies came dancing in a round at the right wheel, one so red that she would hardly have been noted in the fire, another as if the flesh and bones had been of emerald, the third seeming new-fallen snow; and they seemed to be led, now by the white, now by the red, and from this one's song the others took their movement fast and slow. On the left four made festival, clothed in purple, following the measure of one of them that had three eyes in her head. Behind the whole group I have described I saw two old men, different in dress but alike in grave and dignified bearing; the one showed himself of the household of that great Hippocrates whom nature made for the creatures she holds dearest,[10] the other showed the opposite care, with a sword so bright and sharp that on the far side of the river it put me in fear. Then I saw four of humble aspect, and behind all an old man alone come sleeping, with keen visage. And these seven were clad like the foremost file, except that they did not have wreaths

of lilies about their head but of roses and other red flowers; looking from a little distance one would have sworn that all were burning above the eyebrows. And when the car was opposite me a thunder-clap was heard and that noble throng seemed forbidden to go farther and stopped there along with the banners in front.

CANTO XXX

Beatrice on the car; the disappearance of Virgil; Beatrice's rebuke of Dante

WHEN the Wain of the first heaven stood still that never knew setting or rising or veil of any mist but of sin and there made each know his duty as does the Wain below for him that turns the helm to come to port,[1] the truthful company that came at first between it and the Griffin turned to the car as to their peace; and one of them, like a messenger from heaven, called three times, singing: '*Veni, sponsa, de Libano*',[2] and all the others after him. As the blessed shall rise at the last trump each eager from his tomb, the reclad voice singing Hallelujah, there rose up on the divine chariot at the voice of so great an elder a hundred ministers and messengers of eternal life, who all cried: '*Benedictus qui venis*',[3] and, throwing flowers up and around, '*Manibus o date lilia plenis.*'[4] I once saw at the beginning of the day the eastern parts all rosy and the rest of the sky clear and beautiful and the sun's face come forth shaded so that through the tempering vapours the eye could bear it long; so, within a cloud of flowers which rose from the angels' hands and fell again within and without, a lady

appeared to me, girt with olive over a white veil, clothed under a green mantle with the colour of living flame. And my spirit, which now so long had not been overcome with awe, trembling in her presence,[5] without having more knowledge by the eyes, through hidden virtue that came from her, felt old love's great power. As soon as the lofty virtue smote on my sight which already had pierced me before I was out of my boyhood,[6] I turned to the left with the confidence of a little child that runs to his mother when he is afraid or in distress, to say to Virgil: 'Not a drop of blood is left in me that does not tremble; I know the marks of the ancient flame.'[7] But Virgil had left us bereft of him, Virgil sweetest father, Virgil to whom I gave myself for my salvation, nor did all the ancient mother lost avail my cheeks washed with dew that they should not be stained again with tears.

'Dante, because Virgil leaves thee weep not, weep not yet, for thou must weep for another sword.'

Like an admiral who goes to poop and prow to see the men that serve on the other ships and to hearten them in their work, so on the left side of the car—when I turned at the sound of my name, which is noted here of necessity—I saw the lady who first appeared to me veiled under the angelic festival direct her eyes on me beyond the stream. Although the veil that fell from her head, encircled with Minerva's leaves, did not let her be plainly

seen, royally, still stern in her bearing, she continued like one who while he speaks holds back his hottest words: 'Look at me well; I am, I am indeed Beatrice. How durst thou approach the mountain? Didst thou not know that here man is happy?'

My eyes fell down to the clear fount, but, seeing myself in it, I drew them back to the grass, so great shame weighed on my brow; so does the mother seem harsh to her child as she seemed to me, for the savour of stern pity tastes bitter. She was silent; and at once the angels sang: '*In te, Domine, speravi*', but did not go beyond '*pedes meos*'.[8] Even as the snow among the living beams along the back of Italy freezes, blown and packed by the Slavonian winds, then, dissolved, drips into itself if only the land that loses shadow breathes, so that it seems fire melting a candle;[9] so was I without tears or sighs before the singing of those who keep ever in tune with the notes of the eternal spheres, but when I heard in the sweet harmonies their compassion on me, more than if they had said: 'Lady, why dost thou so shame him?', the ice that was bound about my heart turned to breath and water and with anguish came forth from my breast by mouth and eyes.

She, still standing motionless on the same side of the car, then directed her words to the pitiful spirits: 'Ye keep watch in the eternal day, so that neither night nor sleep robs you of a step the world makes in its course; therefore my answer is made with more care that he should hear me who weeps yonder, so that sin and sorrow may be of

one measure. Not only by operation of the great wheels which direct each seed to some end according to the stars in their company, but by largess of divine graces which rain down from vapours so high that our sight does not come near them, this man in his early life was such potentially that every right disposition would have come to marvellous proof in him; but so much the more noxious and wild the ground becomes, with bad seed and untilled, as it has more good strength of soil. For a time I sustained him with my countenance. Showing him my youthful eyes I brought him with me, bound on the right way. As soon as I was on the threshold of my second age and I changed life[10] he took himself from me and gave himself to another. When I had risen from flesh to spirit and beauty and virtue had increased in me I was less dear to him and less welcome and he bent his steps in a way not true, following after false images of good which fulfil no promise; nor did it avail me to gain inspirations for him with which both in dream and in other ways I called him back, so little did he heed them. He fell so low that all means for his salvation now came short except to show him the lost people; for this I visited the threshold of the dead and to him who has brought him up here my prayers were offered with tears. God's high decrees would be broken if Lethe were passed and such a draught were tasted without some scot of penitence and shedding of tears.'

CANTO XXXI

Dante's confession; the passage through Lethe; Beatrice unveiled

'O THOU that art on that side of the sacred river', she began again, turning against me the point of her speech which even with the edge had seemed sharp to me[1] and continuing without pause, 'say, say if this is true; to such an accusation thy confession must needs be joined.'

My faculties were so confounded that my voice began and was spent before it was released from its organs.

She forbore a little, then said: 'What thinkest thou? Answer me, for the sad memories are not yet destroyed in thee by the water.'

Confusion and fear mingled together drove forth from my mouth a *Yes* such that to hear it there was need of sight. As a cross-bow shot with too great strain breaks the cord and bow and the shaft touches the mark with less force, so I broke down under that heavy charge, pouring forth tears and sighs, and my voice failed in its passage. At which she said to me: 'In the desires for me which were leading thee in love of the good beyond which there is nothing to be longed for, what cross-ditches or chains didst thou meet with for which thou must thus give up the hope of going forward, and what attractions and advantages showed in the aspect of other things for which thou must be at their service?'

After heaving a bitter sigh I had hardly the voice to answer and the lips shaped it with difficulty; weeping, I said: 'Present things with their false pleasure turned my steps as soon as your[2] face was hid.'

And she: 'Hadst thou kept silence or denied what thou confessest, thy fault would be not less plain, by such a judge is it known, but when from a man's own cheek breaks forth condemnation of his sin, in our court the wheel turns back against the edge.[3] Nevertheless, in order that thou mayst now bear the shame of thy wandering and another time, hearing the Sirens, be stronger, lay aside the sowing of tears and hearken; so shalt thou hear how my buried flesh should have directed thee the other way. Never did nature or art set before thee beauty so great as the fair members in which I was enclosed, and they are crumbled in the dust; and if the highest beauty thus failed thee by my death, what mortal thing should then have drawn thee into desire for it? Truly thou oughtest, at the first shaft of deceptive things, to have risen up after me who was such no longer. No young girl or other vanity of such brief worth should have bent thy wings downward to await more shots. A young chick waits for two or three, but in vain is the net spread or arrow shot in the sight of the full-fledged bird.'

As children ashamed stand dumb with eyes on the ground, listening and acknowledging their fault and repentant, so I stood there, and she said: 'Since by hearing thou art grieved, lift up thy beard and thou shalt have grief by looking.'

With less resistance is uprooted the sturdy oak, whether in the wind from our parts or from the country of Iarbas,[4] than I raised at her command my chin, and when by the beard she demanded my face I noted well the venom of the argument. And when my face was lifted up my sight marked those primal creatures pause in their scattering of flowers, and my eyes, still lacking confidence, saw Beatrice turned toward the beast which is one sole person in two natures. Beneath her veil and beyond the stream, she seemed to me to surpass her former self more than she surpassed the others here when she was with us. The nettle of remorse so stung me there that of all other things that which had most bent me to the love of it became for me the most hateful; such self-conviction bit me at the heart that I fell overcome and what I became then she knows who was the cause of it. Then, when my heart restored my outward sense, the lady I had found alone I saw above me, and she was saying: 'Hold me, hold me!' She had brought me into the river up to the throat and, drawing me after her, was passing over the water light as a shuttle. When I was close to the blessed shore I heard '*Asperges me*'[5] so sweetly sung that I cannot recall, far less write it. The fair lady opened her arms, clasped my head, and plunged me under, where I must swallow the water; then she took me out and led me bathed into the dance of the four fair ones, and each covered me with her arm.

'Here we are nymphs and in heaven are stars. Before Beatrice descended to the world we were ordained to be her handmaids. We will bring thee

to her eyes; but for the happy light that is within them the three on the other side, who look deeper, shall quicken thine.' Thus they began to sing and then brought me with them to the breast of the Griffin, where Beatrice stood turned to us, and they said: 'See thou do not withhold thy gaze; we have set thee before the emeralds from which love once shot his darts at thee.'

A thousand desires hotter than flame held my eyes on the shining eyes, which remained still fixed on the Griffin, and even like the sun in a mirror the two-fold beast shone within them, now with the one, now with the other nature.[6] Think, reader, if I marvelled when I saw the thing still in itself and in its image changing. While my soul, full of amazement and gladness, tasted of that food which, satisfying with itself, for itself makes appetite,[7] the other three, showing themselves by their bearing to be of a higher order, moved forward, dancing to their angelic roundelay.

'Turn, Beatrice, turn thy holy eyes on thy faithful one,' was their song 'who, for sight of thee, has made so great a journey; of thy grace do us the grace to unveil thy mouth to him, that he may discern the second beauty,[8] which thou concealest.'

O splendour of living light eternal, who has ever grown so pale under Parnassus' shade or drunk so deep of its well that he would not seem to have a mind disabled, trying to render thee as thou appearedst there, heaven with its harmonies overhanging thee, when in the free air thou didst disclose thyself?

CANTO XXXII

The wheeling of the pageant; the great tree; disasters to the car

So fixed and intent were my eyes in satisfying their ten years' thirst[1] that every other sense was quenched in me and on the one side and the other they had a wall of indifference, so did the holy smile draw them to itself with the old net, when my face was turned perforce to my left by those divine ones, for I heard them say: 'Too fixed!' and the condition of the sight that is in eyes just smitten by the sun left me for a time without vision. But after my sight had adjusted itself to the lesser object—lesser, I mean, with regard to the greater from which I was forced to withdraw—I saw that the glorious army had wheeled on its right flank and was returning with the sun and the seven flames in its face. As under the shields a squadron wheels about to save itself and turns with the colours before the whole can change front, all that soldiery of the celestial kingdom, being in the van, passed by us before the pole brought round the car. Then the ladies returned to the wheels and the Griffin moved the blessed burden, but without shaking one of its feathers. The fair lady who had drawn me across and Statius and I followed the wheel that made its turn with the smaller arc and

as we passed through the lofty wood, empty by her fault who believed the serpent, an angelic music timed our steps. Perhaps three flights of an arrow loosed from the string would cover as much space as we had gone, when Beatrice descended. I heard a murmur from them all of 'Adam!' Then they encircled a tree stripped of its flowers and all its foliage in every branch; its tresses, which spread wider as they went higher, would be marvelled at by the Indians in their woods for height.

'Blessed art thou, Griffin, that dost not pluck with thy beak from this tree, sweet to the taste, for the belly writhes in pain from it.' Thus the others cried round the mighty tree, and the twice-begotten animal: 'So is preserved the seed of all righteousness'; and turning to the shaft which he had pulled he drew it to the foot of the widowed trunk and left it bound to the tree by a branch of the tree itself. As our plants, when the great light falls on them mingled with that which shines behind the celestial Carp, begin to swell and then each is renewed in its own colour before the sun yokes his steeds under other stars,[2] so, showing colour less than of the rose and more than of the violet, the tree was renewed which before had its branches so bare. I did not comprehend, nor is it sung here, the hymn that company then sang, nor did I bear to hear the music through.

If I could describe how the pitiless eyes, hearing of Syrinx, were put to sleep, the eyes whose long watching cost so dear,[3] I would picture as a painter paints from a model how I fell asleep; but let who will rightly set forth slumbering. I pass, therefore,

to when I awoke and tell that a brightness broke the veil of sleep, and a call: 'Arise, what doest thou?'

As, when brought to see some of the blossoms of the apple-tree that makes the angels greedy for its fruit and makes perpetual marriage-feast in heaven, Peter and John and James were overpowered and came to themselves again at the word by which deeper slumbers were broken and saw their company diminished by both Moses and Elias and their Master's raiment changed,[4] so I came to myself and saw standing over me that compassionate lady who was before the guide of my steps along the river. And all in doubt I said: 'Where is Beatrice?' To which she replied: 'See her beneath the new foliage, seated upon its root; see the company that encircles her; the others take their way above after the Griffin, with a sweeter and profounder song.'

And if her speech continued longer I do not know, for already she was before my eyes who had shut me off from every other care. She sat alone on the bare ground, left there as guardian of the chariot I had seen the bi-formed beast make fast. The seven nymphs in a ring made of themselves a cloister for her, with those lights in their hands which are safe from north wind and south.

'Here thou shalt be a little while a forester, and shalt be with me forever a citizen of that Rome of which Christ is Roman; therefore, for the world's good which lives ill, hold thine eyes now on the car and what thou seest do thou write when thou hast returned yonder.'[5] Thus Beatrice; and I, who at her command was wholly bowed down and submissive, gave mind and eyes as she wished.

Never fire descended so swiftly from dense cloud, falling from the farthest bound, as I saw the bird of Jove swoop down through the tree, tearing not only the flowers and fresh leaves but the bark, and it struck the car with all its force so that it reeled like a ship in storm driven, now leeward, now windward, by the waves.

Then I saw fling itself on the body of the triumphal chariot a fox that seemed starved of all good nourishment; but my lady, rebuking its foul offences, drove it back in such flight as the fleshless bones allowed.

Then, from the place it came from before, I saw the eagle descend into the body of the car and leave it feathered with its plumage; and such a voice as comes from a grieving heart I heard come forth from heaven and it said: 'O my little bark, with how much ill art thou laden!'

Then it seemed to me the earth opened between the two wheels, and I saw a dragon come forth there that drove its tail up through the car, and, as a wasp withdraws its sting, so, drawing back the malignant tail, it dragged out part of the bottom and made off on its wandering way.

What was left was covered again, as fertile soil with dog-grass, with the plumage, offered perhaps with pure and gracious intent, and the one and the other wheel and the shaft were covered with it in less time that a sigh keeps open the lips.

Thus transformed, the holy structure put forth heads on its parts, three on the shaft and one at each corner, the three horned like oxen and the four with a single horn on the forehead; such a monster was never seen.

Secure, like a fortress on a high mountain, appeared to me an ungirt harlot seated on it, looking about her with bold brows, and as if that she might not be taken from him I saw a giant standing beside her, and they kissed each other again and again. But because she turned on me her wanton and roving eye that savage lover beat her from head to foot; then, full of suspicion and fierce with rage, he loosed the monster and dragged it through the wood so far that he made the wood itself screen from me the harlot and the strange brute.

CANTO XXXIII

Beatrice's promise of a deliverer; the sanctity of the tree; the passage through Eunoe

'*Deus, venerunt gentes*'[1] the ladies, singing now three now four responsively and weeping, began sweet psalmody, and Beatrice, sighing and compassionate, listened to them, so altered that Mary changed little more at the cross; but when the other virgins gave place to her to speak she answered, rising erect on her feet and glowing like fire: '*Modicum, et non videbitis me; et iterum*, my beloved sisters, *modicum, et vos videbitis me*.'[2] Then she put all seven in front of her, and behind her, with only a gesture, motioned me and the lady and the sage who remained. Thus she went forward, and I do not think she had taken the tenth step on the ground when with her eyes she smote on mine and with tranquil look said to me: 'Come more quickly, so that, if I speak with thee, thou shalt be ready to listen to me.' And as soon as I was with her, as was my duty, she said to me: 'Brother, why dost thou not venture to question me, now thou comest with me?'

As with those that are too reverent before their superiors with whom they speak to bring the voice distinctly to their lips, so it was with me, and with

imperfect utterance I began: 'My lady, you know my need and what will meet it.'

And she said to me: 'From fear and shame I will have thee free thyself henceforth, that thou mayst no longer speak like one that dreams. Know that the vessel the serpent broke was and is not,[3] but let him that has the blame be assured that God's vengeance fears no sop.[4] Not for all time shall the eagle be without heir that left its feathers on the car so that it became monster and then prey; for I see assuredly, and therefore tell of it, stars already near, to give us the time, secure from all check and hindrance, when a five hundred, ten and five, one sent from God, shall slay the thievish woman and the giant who sins with her. And perhaps my dark tale, like Themis and the Sphinx, persuades thee less because, in their fashion, it clouds thy mind; but soon the facts shall be the Naiads that will solve this hard enigma without loss of flocks and corn.[5] Take note, and even as these words are uttered by me so teach them to those who live the life that is a race to death; and have in mind, when thou writest them, not to hide what thou hast seen of the tree which has now twice over been robbed here. Whoso robs that tree or rends it offends with blasphemy of act against God, who for His own sole use created it holy; for tasting of that tree the first soul longed in pain and in desire five thousand years and more for Him who avenged on Himself that taste.[6] Thy wits sleep if they do not reckon that for some due cause it is of such loftiness and is thus reversed

at the top, and if vain thoughts had not been water of Elsa[7] about thy mind and thy delight in them a Pyramus to the mulberry,[8] by such features alone thou wouldst recognize in the interdict on the tree, morally, the righteousness of God.[9] But since I see thee turned to stone in thy mind and, being petrified, darkened, so that the light of my speech dazzles thee, I will also that thou bear it away within thee, and if not written at least pictured, for the reason that the staff is brought back wreathed with palm.'[10]

And I: 'Even as by seal the wax, which does not change the imprinted figure, my brain is now stamped by you; but why do your longed-for words fly so far above my sight that the more it strives the more it loses them?'

'So that thou mayst know' she said 'that school which thou hast followed and see if its teaching can follow my words and see your way to be as far from God's way as the heaven that spins highest is parted from the earth.'[11]

To that I replied: 'I have no remembrance that I ever estranged me from you, nor have I conscience of it that pricks me.'

'And if thou canst not remember it' she answered smiling 'recollect now how thou didst drink to-day of Lethe, and if fire is inferred from smoke this forgetfulness clearly proves fault in thy will intent elsewhere.[12] But henceforth my words shall be as simple as may be needful to make them plain to thy rude sight.'

Now more resplendent and with slower steps the sun held the meridian circle which shifts here and there with the point of view,[13] when, just as one

going before a company for escort stops if he comes on something strange on his way, the seven ladies stopped at the edge of a dim shade such as under green leaves and black boughs the mountains cast on their cold streams, and in front of them I seemed to see Euphrates and Tigris issue from one spring and, like friends, slowly separate.

'O light, O glory of the human race, what water is this that pours here from one source and parts itself from itself?' When I asked this she said to me: 'Ask Matilda to tell thee'; and then the fair lady answered, as one freeing herself from blame: 'This and other things I have told him and I am certain that Lethe's waters did not hide it from him.'

And Beatrice: 'Perhaps a greater care, which often robs the memory, has darkened the eyes of his mind. But see Eunoe which flows forth there; bring him to it and, as thou art used, revive his weakened faculty.'

As a gentle spirit that makes no excuse but makes its will of another's will as soon as it is disclosed by a sign, so, when she had taken me by the hand, the fair lady moved and with womanly courtesy said to Statius: 'Come with him.'

If, reader, I had more space to write I should sing but in part the sweet draught which never would have sated me; but since all the sheets prepared for this second cantica are full the curb of art does not let me go farther. From the most holy waters I came forth again remade, even as new plants renewed with new leaves, pure and ready to mount to the stars.

BOOK III
PARADISE
CANTO I

The appeal to Apollo; the ascent from the earth; the order of the universe

THE glory of Him who moves all things penetrates the universe and shines in one part more and in another less. I was in the heaven that most receives His light[1] and I saw things which he that descends from it has not the knowledge or the power to tell again; for our intellect, drawing near to its desire, sinks so deep that memory cannot follow it. Nevertheless, so much of the holy kingdom as I was able to treasure in my mind shall now be matter of my song.

O good Apollo, for the last labour make me such a vessel of thy power as thou requirest for the gift of thy loved laurel. Thus far the one peak of Parnassus has sufficed me, but now I have need of both,[2] entering on the arena that remains. Come into my breast and breathe there as when thou drewest Marsyas from the scabbard of his limbs.[3] O power divine, if thou grant me so much of thyself that I may show forth the shadow of the blessed kingdom imprinted in my brain thou shalt see me come to thy chosen tree and crown myself then with those leaves of which the theme and thou will make me worthy. So seldom, father, are they

gathered for triumph of Caesar or of poet—fault and shame of human wills—that the Peneian bough must beget gladness in the glad Delphic god when it makes any long for it.[4] A great flame follows a little spark. Perhaps after me prayer will be made with better words so that Cyrrha may respond.

The lamp of the world rises on mortals by different entrances; but by that which joins four circles with three crosses it issues on a better course and in conjunction with better stars and tempers and stamps the wax of the world more after its own fashion.[5] Its entrance near that point had made morning there and evening here and that hemisphere was all white and the other dark, when I saw Beatrice turned round to the left[6] and looking at the sun—never eagle so fastened upon it; and as a second ray will issue from the first and mount up again,[7] like a pilgrim that would return home, so from her action, infused by the eyes into my imagination, mine was made, and beyond our wont I fixed my eyes on the sun. Much is granted there that is not granted here to our powers, by virtue of the place made for possession by the race of men. I had not borne it long, yet not so briefly as not to see it sparkling like iron that comes boiling from the fire; and of a sudden it seemed there was added day to day, as if He that is able had decked the sky with a second sun. Beatrice stood with her eyes fixed only on the eternal wheels, and on her I fixed mine, withdrawn from above. At her aspect I

was changed within, as was Glaucus when he tasted of the herb that made him one among the other gods in the sea.[8] The passing beyond humanity cannot be set forth in words; let the example suffice, therefore, for him to whom grace reserves the experience. If I was only that part of me which Thou createdst last, Thou knowest, Love that rulest the heavens, who with Thy light didst raise me.[9] When the wheel which Thou, being desired, makest eternal held me intent on itself by the harmony Thou dost attune and distribute,[10] so much of the sky seemed then to be kindled with the sun's flame that rain or river never made a lake so broad. The newness of the sound and the great light kindled in me such keenness of desire to know their cause as I had never felt before; and she who saw me as I saw myself, to quiet the agitation of my mind, opened her lips before I mine to ask. And she began: 'Thou makest thyself dull with false fancies so that thou canst not see as thou wouldst if thou hadst cast them off; thou art not on earth as thou thinkest, but lightning flying from its own place[11] never ran so fast as thou returnest to thine.'

If I was freed from my perplexity by the brief words she smiled to me I was more entangled in a new one and I said: 'I was content already, resting from a great wonder, but now I wonder how I should be rising above these light substances.'[12]

She, therefore, after a sigh of pity, bent her eyes on me with the look a mother casts on her delirious child, and she began: 'All things whatsoever have order among themselves, and this is the form that makes the universe resemble God; here the higher

creatures see the impress of the Eternal Excellence, which is the end for which that system itself is made.[13] In the order I speak of all natures have their bent according to their different lots, nearer to their source and farther from it; they move, therefore, to different ports over the great sea of being, each with an instinct given it to bear it on: this bears fire up towards the moon,—this is the motive force in mortal creatures,—this binds the earth together and makes it one. And not only the creatures that are without intelligence does this bow shoot, but those also that have intellect and love. The providence that regulates all this makes forever quiet with its light the heaven within which turns that of greatest speed,[14] and thither now as to a place appointed the power of that bowstring is bearing us which aims at a joyous mark. It is true that, as a shape often does not accord with the art's intention because the material is deaf and unresponsive, so sometimes the creature, having the power, thus impelled, to turn aside another way, deviates from this course, and, as fire may be seen to fall from a cloud, so the primal impulse, diverted by false pleasure, is turned to the earth.[15] If I am right, thou shouldst no more wonder at thy ascent than at a stream falling from a mountain-height to the foot; it would be a wonder in thee if, freed from hindrance, thou hadst remained below, as on earth would be stillness in living flame.'

Then she turned her face again to the sky.

CANTO II

The Sphere of the Moon; the spots on the Moon; the influences of the heavens

O YE who in a little bark, eager to listen, have followed behind my ship that singing makes her way, turn back to see your shores again; do not put forth on the deep, for, perhaps, losing me, you would be left bewildered. The waters I take were never sailed before. Minerva breathes, Apollo pilots me, and the nine Muses show me the Bears.

Ye other few that reached out early for the angels' bread by which men here live but never come from it satisfied,[1] you may indeed put forth your vessel on the salt depths, holding my furrow before the water returns smooth again. Those glorious ones who crossed the sea to Colchis were not amazed as you shall be, when they saw Jason turned ploughman.[2]

The inborn and perpetual thirst for the godlike kingdom bore us away, swift, almost, as your glance to heaven. Beatrice was gazing upward, and I on her, and in the time, perhaps, that a bolt strikes and flies and looses from the catch I saw that I had come where a marvellous thing drew my sight to itself. She, therefore, from whom my

thought could not be hid turned to me, as happy as she was fair, and said to me: 'Direct thy grateful mind to God, who has brought us to the first star.'[3]

It seemed to me that a cloud covered us, shining, dense, solid and smooth, like a diamond that is smitten by the sun; the eternal pearl received us into itself, as water receives a ray of light and remains unbroken. If I was body—and here we cannot conceive how one bulk admitted another, which must be if body enters into body—it should the more kindle our desire to see His being in whom is seen how our nature was joined to God. There will be seen that which we hold by faith, not demonstrated but known in itself, like the primal truth that man believes.[4]

I replied: 'My Lady, with all the devotion of my heart I give thanks to Him who has taken me from the mortal world. But tell me, what are the dark marks on this body which make men on earth below tell the tale of Cain?'[5]

She smiled a little, then said to me: 'If the judgement of mortals errs where the key of sense fails to unlock, surely the shafts of wonder should not prick thee henceforth, since even following after the senses thou seest that reason's wings are short.[6] But tell me what thou thinkest of it thyself.'

And I: 'That which appears to us diverse up here I suppose to be caused by rare and dense matter.'

And she: 'Assuredly thou shalt see thy belief to be sunk deep in error if thou listen well to the reasons I bring against it.

'The eighth sphere shows you many lights, which both in quality and in magnitude can be seen to be of different aspects, and if rarity and density

alone produced this, one single virtue would be in them all, distributed more and less and equally; different virtues must needs be fruits of formative principles, and it would follow from thy reasoning that these, except one, would be annulled.[7] Again, if rarity were the cause of that dimness of which thou askest, either this planet would be lacking of its matter right through in parts, or else, just as fat and lean are distributed in a body, this would alternate the pages in its volume. In the former case it would be evident in eclipses of the sun by the light showing through as when it is brought into any other rare medium; this is not so, therefore we must look at the other case, and if then I destroy that, thy view will be proved false. If it be that this rarity does not go through, there must be a limit at which its opposite does not let it pass farther, and from that the other's ray is thrown back just as colour returns through glass that conceals lead behind it. Now thou wilt say that the ray shows dim there more than in other parts from being reflected there farther back, and from this objection experiment, if ever thou try it, may free thee,—the spring always of the streams of your arts. Take three mirrors and put two of them at an equal distance from thee, and let the other, farther off, meet thy eyes between the first two; then, turned to them, have a light set behind thy back which kindles the three mirrors and returns to thee struck back by them all. Although the light seen farthest off is not of the same size thou wilt see then that it must shine with equal brightness.[8]

'Now, as the substance of the snow, smitten by the warm rays, is left bare both of its former colour and its cold,[9] so I would inform thee, left thus bare in thy mind, with a light so living that it will sparkle in thy sight.

'Within the heaven of the divine peace spins a body in whose virtue lies the being of all that it contains;[10] the next heaven, which has so many sights, distributes that being among different existences, distinct from it and contained in it;[11] the other spheres, by various differences, direct the distinctive qualities which they have in themselves to their ends and fruitful working.[12] These organs of the universe proceed thus, as thou seest now, grade by grade, each receiving from above and operating below. Observe well now how I pass by this way to the truth thou seekest, so that then thou mayst know how to take the ford alone. The motion and the virtue of the holy wheels must derive from the blessed movers,[13] as the craft of the hammer from the smith; and the heaven that so many lights make fair takes its stamp from the profound mind that turns it, and of that stamp becomes itself the seal; and as the soul within your dust is diffused through different members that are adapted to various faculties, so the Intelligence unfolds its bounty, multiplied through the stars, itself wheeling on its own unity.[14] Diverse virtue makes diverse alloy with the precious body which it quickens and with which, even as life in you, it is bound;[15] by the joyous nature whence it springs the mingled virtue shines through the body as

joy through the living pupil. From this comes that difference which appears between light and light, not from density and rarity; this is the formative principle which produces, according to its excellence, the dark and bright.'

CANTO III

Faithfulness marred by inconstancy; Piccarda Donati; the Empress Constance

THAT sun which first warmed my breast with love had discovered to me, by proof and refutation, fair truth's sweet aspect, and I raised my head—but not higher than was need for speech—to confess myself corrected and assured; but a sight appeared to me which held me so fast to itself to see it that of my confession I had no remembrance. As through smooth and transparent glass, or through limpid and still water not so deep that the bottom is lost, the outlines of our faces return so faint that a pearl on a white brow does not come less quickly to our eyes, many such faces I saw, eager to speak; at which I ran into the opposite error to that which kindled love between the man and the spring.[1] The moment I was aware of them, taking them for reflected semblances, I turned my eyes to see whose they were, and saw nothing, and turned them forward again straight into the light of my sweet guide, whose holy eyes were glowing with a smile.

'Do not wonder' she said to me 'that I smile at thy childish thought, since it does not yet trust its foot on the truth but turns thee back, as it is wont, on vacancy. These are real beings that thou seest, assigned here for failure in their vows; therefore

speak with them and hear and believe, for the true light that gives them peace does not let them turn their steps from itself.'

And I directed myself to the shade that seemed most desirous of speech, and began, all but overcome with excess of eagerness: 'O spirit made for bliss, who in the beams of eternal life knowest the sweetness which, not tasted, never is conceived, it will be a kindness to me if thou satisfy me with thy name and with your lot.'

Then she, eager and with smiling eyes: 'Our charity does not shut the doors against right will, any more than His who wills all His court to be like Himself. In the world I was a virgin sister, and if thou search well in thy memory my being more fair will not hide me from thee, and thou wilt know me again for Piccarda,[2] who am put here with these other blest and am blest in the slowest of the spheres. Our affections, which are kindled only in the pleasure of the Holy Ghost, rejoice in being conformed to His order, and this lot which seems so low is given us because our vows were neglected and in some part void.'

Then I said to her: 'In your wondrous aspects there shines forth I know not what of divine which transforms you from our former knowledge; that is why I was not quick to remember, but now what thou sayest helps me so that I more clearly recall thy features. But tell me, do you who are happy here desire a higher place, that you may see more and become more dear?'[3]

With the other shades there she first smiled a little, then answered me with such gladness that she seemed to burn in the first fire of love: 'Brother,

the power of charity quiets our will and makes us will only what we have and thirst for nothing else. Did we desire to be more exalted, our desire would be in discord with His will who appoints us here, which thou wilt see cannot hold in these circles if to be in charity is here *necesse*[4] and if thou consider well its nature. Nay, it is the very quality of this blessed state that we keep ourselves within the divine will, so that our wills are themselves made one; therefore our rank from height to height through this kingdom is pleasing to the whole kingdom, as to the King who wills us to His will. And in His will is our peace. It is that sea to which all things move, both what it creates and what nature makes.'[5]

It was clear to me then that everywhere in heaven is Paradise, although the grace of the Supreme Good does not rain there in one measure. But as it happens, when of one food we have enough and the craving for another still remains, that we ask for this and give thanks for that, so I did with speech and gesture, to learn from her what was the web through which she had not drawn the shuttle to the end.[6]

'Perfect life and high desert' she said to me 'place in a higher heaven a lady by whose rule in your world below they take the robe and veil,[7] so that till death they may wake and sleep with that Bridegroom who accepts every vow that charity conforms to His pleasure. To follow her I fled, a young girl, from the world and wrapped me in her habit and promised myself to the way of her order. Then men more used to evil than to good snatched me from the sweet cloister. God knows what my life was then.

'And this other splendour that appears to thee on my right and is kindled with all the light of our sphere applies to herself my own story. She was a sister, and in like manner there was taken from her head the shade of the holy wimple; but even after she was turned back to the world against her will and against right custom she was never loosed from the veil on the heart. It is the light of the great Constance, who bore to the second blast of Swabia the third and last potentate.'[8]

She spoke thus to me, then began singing *Ave Maria* and singing vanished, like a weight through deep water. My sight, which followed her as long as it was possible, turned, when it lost her, to the mark of its greater desire and bent itself wholly on Beatrice; but she so flashed on my gaze that at first my eyes could not bear it, which made me slower to question her.

CANTO IV

Dante's questions; the souls appearing in the spheres really in the Empyrean; violence no excuse for failure of the will; the intellect's demand for truth

BETWEEN two foods at equal distance and equally tempting a free man would die of hunger before he brought either to his lips—so a lamb would stand between the cravings of two fierce wolves, in equal fear of both—so would a hound stand between two does; therefore if I kept silence, urged equally by my doubts, I neither blame nor commend myself, since it was of necessity. I was silent, but my desire was painted on my face, and with it my question, far more warmly than in plain words.

Beatrice did as did Daniel when he appeased the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar that made him cruelly unjust,[1] and she said: 'I see well how one desire and another draw thee, so that thy eagerness itself binds itself and does not get breath. Thou reasonest: "If the right will endures, on what ground does another's violence lessen the measure of my desert?" Also, it gives thee perplexity that the souls seem to return to the stars, in agreement with Plato's teaching. These are the questions that press equally on thy will. First, then, I shall deal with that which has more poison in it.[2]

'Not he of the Seraphim that is most made one with God, not Moses, Samuel, or whichever John thou wilt—none, not Mary herself, have their seat in other heaven from these spirits that have now appeared to thee, nor for their being have more years or fewer; but all make fair the first circle and hold sweet life in different measure as they feel more and less the eternal breath.[3] These have shown themselves here, not that this sphere is allotted to them, but in sign of the heavenly rank that is least exalted. It is necessary to speak thus to your faculty, since only from sense perception does it grasp that which it then makes fit for the intellect.[4] For this reason Scripture condescends to your capacity and attributes hands and feet to God, having another meaning, and Holy Church represents to you with human aspect Gabriel and Michael and the other who made Tobit whole again.[5] What Timaeus argues about the souls is not like that which we see here; for what he says he seems to hold for truth. He says the soul returns to its own star, from which he believes it to have been separated when nature gave it for a form;[6] but perhaps his view is other than his words express and may have a meaning not to be despised. If he means the return to these wheels of the honour and the blame of their influence, his bow perhaps strikes on a certain truth. This principle, ill-understood, once misled almost the whole world, so that it went astray, naming them Jupiter and Mercury and Mars.[7]

'The other doubt that troubles thee has less poison, because its mischief could not lead thee away from me. That our justice appears unjust in

the eyes of mortals is evidence of faith, not of heretical wickedness; but since your understanding is well able to enter into this truth I shall content thee as thou desirest.[8] If violence is when he that suffers takes no part with him that enforces, these souls were not excused on that account. For will, if it will not, is not quenched, but does as nature does in fire though violence wrench it aside a thousand times; therefore if it bends much or little it seconds the force, and these did so when they might have fled back to the holy place. If their will had been unbroken, like that which kept Lawrence on the grid and made Mucius stern to his own hand,[9] then, as soon as they were free, it would have driven them back on the path from which they had been dragged; but will so firm is rare indeed. And by these words, if thou hast rightly taken them in, the reasoning is quashed that would often have troubled thee still.

'But now another hard place lies across the way before thine eyes, such that thou wouldst not get past it by thyself before being exhausted. I have set it surely in thy mind that a soul in bliss cannot lie, since it is always near the primal truth, and then thou couldst hear from Piccarda that Constance kept her love for the veil; so that here she seems to contradict me. Many a time ere now, brother, has it happened that unwillingly, for escape from danger, that has been done which ought not to have been done; as Alcmaeon, urged by his father, slew his own mother and, not to fail in piety, turned pitiless.[10] At this point, I would have thee

reflect, force mixes with the will and they so operate that the offences cannot be excused. The absolute will does not consent to the wrong, but the will consents in so far as it fears, by drawing back, to fall into more trouble; Piccarda, therefore, in what she says, means the absolute will, and I the other, so that we both speak truth.'[11]

Such was the rippling of the holy stream that issued from the fount from which springs every truth, and it set at rest the one desire and the other.

'O beloved of the First Lover,' I said then 'divine one whose speech so floods and warms me that I am quickened more and more, not all the depth of my affection is sufficient to render you grace for grace; but may He recompense it who sees and can. I see well that our intellect is never satisfied unless the truth enlighten it beyond which no truth can range. In that it rests as soon as it gains it, like a beast in its lair; and it can gain it, else every desire were vain. Doubt, therefore, like a shoot, springs from the root of the truth, and it is nature that urges us to the summit from height to height. It is this, Lady, that invites and emboldens me to ask you with reverence of another truth that is obscure to me; I would know if a man can so satisfy you with other good works for vows unfulfilled that in your balance they will not come short.'

Beatrice looked at me with eyes so full of the sparkling of love and so divine that my power, overcome, took flight and, with eyes cast down, I was almost lost.

CANTO V

The sanctity of vows; the Sphere of Mercury; service marred by ambition

'If I glow on thee with the flame of love beyond all that is seen on earth so that I overcome the power of thine eyes, do not marvel, for it comes from perfect vision, which, as it apprehends, moves towards the apprehended good. I see well how there shines now in thy mind the eternal light which, seen, alone and always kindles love; and if aught else beguile your love it is nothing but some trace of this, ill-understood, that shines through there. Thou wouldst know if with other service it is possible so to make good for a vow unfulfilled that the soul is secure from challenge.'

Thus Beatrice began this canto and, like one who would not interrupt his speech, continued thus her holy theme: 'The greatest gift that God in His bounty made in creation, the most conformable to His goodness and the one He accounts the most precious, was the freedom of the will, with which the creatures with intelligence, all and only these, were and are endowed. Now will appear to thee, reasoning from this, the high worth of the vow, if it be such that God consents when thou consentest; for in the establishing of the compact between God and man this treasure, being such as I have said, becomes the sacrifice, and that by its own act.

What then can be given in its place? If thou think to use well that which thou hast offered, thou wouldst do good works with ill-got gains.

'Thou art now assured on the chief point; but since Holy Church gives dispensations in this matter—which seems contrary to the truth I have declared to thee—thou must sit a little longer at the table, for the tough food thou hast taken requires more help for thy digestion of it. Open thy mind to what I lay before thee and hold it fast there, for to have heard without retaining does not make knowledge. Two things belong to the essence of this sacrifice; the one is that of which it is made, the other is the compact itself. This last is never annulled except by fulfilment, and it is of this I spoke just now so precisely; therefore necessity was upon the Hebrews still to make an offering, though some offerings might be changed, as thou must know.[1] The other part, explained to thee as the matter of the vow, may indeed be such that there is no fault if it is exchanged for other matter; but let no one shift the burden on his shoulder by his own choice without the turning of both the white and the yellow key;[2] and let every exchange be reckoned vain unless the thing laid down is contained in that taken up as four in six. Whatever, therefore, is of such worth that it weighs down every balance cannot be made good by other outlay.[3] Let not mortals take vows lightly. Be faithful, and with that be not perverse, like Jephthah in his first offering,[4] who ought rather to have said "I did ill" than, keeping faith, to do worse; and thou canst find the same folly in the great leader of the Greeks because of which Iphigenia lamented

her own fair face and made lament for her both wise and simple who heard the tale of such a rite.[5] Be graver, Christians, in your undertakings. Be not like feathers in every wind, and think not that every water will wash you clean. You have the New Testament and the Old, and the Shepherd of the Church to guide you; let that suffice for your salvation. If wicked greed call to you aught else, be men, not senseless sheep, that the Jew in your midst make not a jest of you.[6] Be not like the lamb that leaves its mother's milk and, silly and wanton, fights with itself at its pleasure.'

Thus, in the words I write, Beatrice spoke to me, then turned, full of longing, to the part where the universe is brightest.[7] Her falling silent and her changed look imposed silence on my eager mind, which already had new questions before it; and, like an arrow that strikes the mark before the cord is still, we sped into the second realm. Here I saw my Lady so joyful when she passed into that heaven's light that the planet turned brighter for it; and if the star changed and smiled, what did I become who by my very nature am subject to every kind of change?

As in a fish-pool that is calm and clear the fish draw to that which comes from outside, taking it to be their food, so I saw plainly more than a thousand splendours draw towards us, and in each I heard: 'Lo one who will increase our loves!'[8] And as each shade came near it appeared to be full of happiness, by the bright effulgence that came forth from it.

Think, reader, if this beginning went no further how keenly thou wouldst crave to know the rest, and thou shalt see for thyself what desire I had to hear from them of their state as soon as they were plain to my eyes.

'O born for good, to whom grace has given to see the thrones of the eternal triumph before thy warfare is ended, we are kindled by the light that extends through all heaven; therefore if thou desire to be enlightened about us, satisfy thyself at thy pleasure.' This was said to me by one of those devout spirits; and by Beatrice: 'Speak, speak with confidence, and trust them even as gods.'

'I see well how thou nestest in thine own light, and that thou drawest it from thine eyes, since it sparkles whenever thou smilest;[9] but I know not who thou art, nor why, good spirit, thou hast thy rank in the sphere that is veiled to mortals in another's beams.'[10] I said this, directing myself to the radiance that had first spoken to me, and it then became far brighter than before. Like the sun, which itself conceals itself by excess of light when the heat has gnawed away the dense tempering vapours, so with increase of happiness the holy form hid itself from me within its own beams and thus all enclosed answered me in the manner the next canto chants.

CANTO VI

Justinian; the flight of the Eagle; Romeo

AFTER Constantine turned back the Eagle against the course of heaven which it had followed behind him of old that took Lavinia to wife, for two hundred years and more the bird of God remained on the bounds of Europe, near the mountains from which it first came forth;[1] and there it ruled the world under the shadow of the sacred wings, passing from hand to hand, and, so changing, came into mine. I was Caesar and am Justinian, who, by will of the Primal Love which moves me, removed from the laws what was superfluous and vain.[2] And before I had put my mind to the work I believed that there was but one nature, and not a second, in Christ, and with that faith I was satisfied;[3] but the blessed Agapetus, who was Chief Shepherd, directed me by his words to the true faith. I believed him, and what he held by faith I now see as clearly as thou seest that every contradiction is of false and true.[4] As soon as I took my way beside the Church it pleased God, of His grace, to inspire me with the high task; and I gave myself wholly to it and committed arms to my Belisarius, with whom the right hand of heaven was so joined that it was a sign for me to rest from them.[5]

'Here ends, then, my reply to the first question; but its tenor constrains me to make some addition to it, so that thou mayst see with what reason they act against the most holy standard, both those that take it for their own and those that oppose it.[6] See what valour has made it worthy of reverence, beginning from the hour when Pallas died to give it sway.[7] Thou knowest that it made its stay in Alba for three hundred years and more, till at the last, still for its sake, the three fought with the three;[8] and thou knowest what it did under seven kings, from the wrongs of the Sabine women to the woe of Lucrece, conquering the neighbour peoples round about. Thou knowest what it did when borne by the illustrious Romans against Brennus, against Pyrrhus, against the other princes and communes, so that Torquatus and Quinctius, named from his unkempt locks, the Decii and the Fabii, had the fame I rejoice to embalm.[9] It brought low the pride of the Arabs[10] who behind Hannibal passed the Alpine crags from which, Po, thou fallest. Under it, as youths, Scipio and Pompey triumphed, and to that hill beneath which thou wast born it showed itself bitter.[11] Then, near the time when heaven willed to bring all the world to its own state of peace,[12] Caesar, by the will of Rome, laid hold of it; and what it did from Var to Rhine, Isère saw and Loire and Seine and every valley from which the Rhone is filled. What it did when it issued from Ravenna and leapt the Rubicon was such a flight as no tongue or pen might follow. Towards Spain it wheeled the host, then towards Durazzo, and smote Pharsalia so that grief was felt on the burning Nile. Antandros and the Simois,

whence it set out, it saw again, and the place where Hector lies; then roused itself—the worse for Ptolemy. From there it fell like lightning on Juba, then turned to your west, where it heard Pompey's trumpet.[13] Of what it wrought with its next bearer Brutus and Cassius bark in Hell, and Modena and Perugia were in grief. Still weeps because of it the wretched Cleopatra, who, flying before it, took from the viper sudden and dreadful death. With him it ran as far as the Red Sea shore. With him it set the world in such peace that Janus's shrine was locked.[14]

'But what the standard that moves my speech had done before and was yet to do throughout the mortal kingdom that is subject to it, comes to seem small and dim if with clear eye and right affection we look at it in the hand of the third Caesar; for the Living Justice that inspires me granted to it, in his hand of whom I speak, the glory of doing vengeance for His wrath. And now marvel at what I unfold to thee: that afterwards it ran with Titus to do vengeance on the vengeance for the ancient sin.[15] Then, under its wings, when the Lombard tooth bit Holy Church, Charlemagne won victory and succoured her.[16]

'Now thou canst judge of such men as I accused before, and of their offences, which are the cause of all your ills; the one opposes to the public standard the yellow lilies[17] and the other claims it for a party, so that it is hard to see which offends the more. Let the Ghibellines carry on their arts under another standard, for of this he is always a bad follower who severs it from justice; and let not this

new Charles strike at it with his Guelfs,[18] but let him fear its claws, which have torn the hide from a greater lion. Many a time ere now have the children wept for the father's fault, and let him not think God will change arms for his lilies.[19]

'This little star is adorned with good spirits whose deeds were done for the honour and glory that should follow them; and when desires mount there thus deviously then the rays of the true love must needs mount upwards with less life. But in the measuring of our reward with our desert lies part of our happiness, for we see it to be neither less nor more; thus the Living Justice sweetens our affections so that they can never be warped to any evil. Diverse voices make sweet music, so diverse ranks in our life render sweet harmony among these wheels.

'Within this same pearl shines too the light of Romeo,[20] whose great and noble work was ill rewarded; but the Provençals who wrought against him do not have the laugh, and indeed he takes an ill road who makes of another's well-doing a wrong to himself. Raymond Berenger had four daughters, each of them a queen, and Romeo, a man of low birth and a stranger, did this for him. And when crafty tongues moved him to call to account this just man, who rendered him seven and five for ten, Romeo left there poor and old; and if the world knew the heart he had, begging his bread by morsels, much as it praises him it would praise him more.'

CANTO VII

The divine vengeance; the plan of salvation

'OSANNA, sanctus Deus sabaoth,
Superillustrans claritate tua
Felices ignes horum malacoth!'[1]

—thus, wheeling to his own notes, that spirit, on whom a double light is joined,[2] was seen by me to sing, and he and the others moved in the dance and like swiftest sparks were veiled to me by sudden distance.

I was in doubt, and 'Tell her, tell her!' I said within myself 'Tell my Lady who slakes my thirst with sweet drops.' But that reverence which wholly masters me even with *Be* or *ice*[3] bowed me down like one that falls asleep.

Beatrice did not long leave me thus, but began, shining on me with a smile that would make a man happy in the fire: 'By my judgement, which cannot err, how just vengeance should be justly avenged has set thee pondering;[4] but I will quickly free thy mind, and do thou hearken, for my words shall put before thee great doctrine.

'By not enduring for his good a rein on his will, the man that was never born,[5] condemning himself, condemned all his progeny; therefore mankind

lay sick below in great error for many ages, till it pleased the Word of God to descend where the nature that was separated from its Maker He united with Himself in His own person by sole act of His Eternal Love. Now direct thy sight on what follows from that. This nature, thus united to its Maker, was pure and good, even as it was created; yet in itself, by its own act, it was banned from Paradise[6] because it turned aside from the way of truth and from its life. If, then, the penalty that was wrought by the cross is measured by the nature assumed, none ever stung so justly; so also none was so great a wrong, having regard to the Person who suffered, in whom that nature was bound up. From one act, therefore, came diverse effects, for the same death was pleasing both to God and to the Jews; because of it earth quaked and heaven opened. No longer, now, should it seem hard to thee when it is said that just vengeance was afterwards avenged by a just court.[7]

'But now I see thy mind entangled from thought to thought in a knot from which it waits with eagerness for release: thou sayest, "I follow clearly what I hear, but why God willed this sole way for our redemption is dark to me." This decree, brother, lies buried from the eyes of everyone whose mind is not matured in the flame of love; but since there is much aiming at this mark and little discernment, I shall tell how that way was the most fitting.

'The Divine Goodness, which spurns all envy from itself, burning within itself so sparkles that it displays its eternal beauties. That which imme-

diately derives from it has thenceforth no end, since its imprint, once stamped, does not pass away. That which rains down from it immediately is wholly free, since it is not subject to the power of changing things. It is more conformed to that Goodness and therefore more pleasing to it; for the Holy Ardour that irradiates all things is brightest in that which is most like itself.[8] Of all these gifts the human creature has the privilege, and if one of them is lacking he must needs fall from his noble estate. Sin alone it is that disfranchises him and makes him unlike the Supreme Good so that he is little illumined by its light; and he never returns to his dignity unless he fills up again the void made by his fault, with just penalties for sinful pleasure. Your nature, when it all sinned in its seed,[9] was parted from these dignities, as from Paradise; nor could they be recovered—if thou consider carefully—by any way except the passing of one of these fords: either that God, of His own sole clemency, had pardoned, or that man, of himself, had given satisfaction for his folly. Fix thine eyes now within the abyss of the Eternal Counsel and give thy closest heed to my words. Man could never, within his limits, give satisfaction, for he could not go so low in humility, by a later obedience, as, by disobedience, he had thought to go high;[10] and this is the cause by which man was debarred from the power of giving satisfaction by himself. It was needful, therefore, that by His own ways God should restore man to his full life,—by one way, that is, or by both.[11] But since the deed gratifies

the doer more the more it manifests of the goodness of the heart from which it springs, the Divine Goodness which puts its imprint on the world was pleased to proceed by all its ways to raise you up again; nor between the last night and the first day[12] was or will be a procedure by the one way or the other so lofty or so glorious. For God was more bounteous in giving Himself so as to make man able to raise himself again than if, simply of Himself, he had pardoned; and all other means came short of justice save that the Son of God should humble Himself to become flesh.

'Now to give full satisfaction to all thy wishes, I go back to explain one point, that thou mayst see it as clearly as I do. Thou sayest: "I see water, I see fire and air and earth[13] and all their mixtures come to corruption, having little endurance; and yet these things were created, so that, if what was said is true, they should be secure from corruption."

'The angels, brother, and the pure country where thou art may be said to be created just as they are in their entire being; but the elements thou hast named and those things that are made from them are given their form by created power. Created was the matter that is in them, created was the informing virtue in these stars that wheel about them.[14] The soul of every beast and of the plants is drawn from a potential complex by the shining and motion of the holy lights;[15] but your life the Supreme Beneficence breathes forth immediately, and He so enamours it of Himself that it desires

Him ever after. And from this thou canst also argue your resurrection, if thou recall how human flesh was made, at the time of the making of both the first parents.'[16]

CANTO VIII

The Sphere of Venus; love marred by wantonness; Charles Martel; diversities of temperament

THE world once believed, to its peril, that the fair Cyprian, wheeling in the third epicycle, rayed forth mad love, so that the ancient peoples in their ancient error not only did honour to her with sacrifice and votive cry but honoured also Dione and Cupid, her as her mother, him as her son, and told that he lay in Dido's bosom; and from her with whom I take my start they took the name of the star that woos the sun, now from behind, now in front.[1]

I was not conscious of rising into it, but of being within it my Lady gave me full assurance when I saw her become more fair. And as within a flame a spark is seen, and within a voice a voice is distinguished when one holds the note and the other comes and goes,[2] so I saw within that light other lights in circling movement swifter and slower, in the measure, as I believe, of their eternal vision. From a cold cloud winds never descended, visible or not,[3] so swiftly as not to seem hindered and slow to one that had seen these divine lights come to us, leaving the dance first begun among the high

Seraphim; and among those that appeared in front sounded a *Hosanna* such that I have never since been without the desire to hear it again.

Then one drew nearer us and began alone: 'We are all ready at thy pleasure, that thou mayst have joy of us. We circle in one orbit, at one pace, with one thirst, along with the heavenly Princes whom thou didst once address thus from the world: *Ye who by understanding move the third heaven*;[4] and we are so full of love that, to do thee pleasure, a little quiet will be not less sweet to us.'

After my eyes had been raised with reverence to my Lady and she had satisfied them with assurance of her consent, they turned back to the light that had made such promise of itself, and 'Tell me, who are you?' I said, my voice showing that I was deeply moved. Ah, how much I saw it increase in size and brightness when I spoke, by new joy that was added to its joys! Thus changed, it said to me: 'The world held me but a short time below, and had it been longer much evil that will be would not have been. My happiness keeps me hid from thee, for it rays about me and conceals me like a creature swathed in its own silk. Thou didst love me much, and hadst good cause; for had I been below I would have shown thee much more of my love than the leaves. The left bank that is washed by the Rhone after it mingles with the Sorgue[5] awaited me for its lord in due course, and that horn of Ausonia which has on its borders Bari and Gaeta and Catona, from where Tronto and Verde discharge in the sea.[6] Already shone on my brow the crown of the land which the Danube waters after quitting its German banks;[7] and fair Trinacria,

which between Pachynus and Pelorus, on the gulf that is most vexed by the Sirocco, is darkened—not by Typhon but by rising sulphur[8]—, would still have looked for its kings born through me of Charles and Rudolph, if bad rule, which always exasperates subject peoples, had not moved Palermo to cry "Death, death to them!"[9] And if my brother foresaw this he would already shun the rapacious poverty of Catalonia that it may not make trouble for him; for truly there is need that he or another should look to it that on his loaded bark is not laid a still heavier load. His nature, a mean one descended from a generous, would need a knighthood who do not make it their business to fill their chests.'[10]

'Because I believe, my lord, that, as plainly as it is plain to myself, the deep joy with which thy words have filled me is seen by thee where every good has its end and its beginning, it is the more welcome to me; and I hold it dear too that thou discernest this in gazing upon God.[11] Thou hast made me glad; so too do thou enlighten me, for thy words have raised the question in my mind how from sweet seed can come bitter fruit.'[12]

I spoke to him thus, and he replied: 'If I can show thee one truth,[13] thou wilt then have before thine eyes the answer to thy question which is now behind thy back. The Good that revolves and satisfies the whole kingdom thou art climbing makes its providence to be power in these great bodies; and not only is the nature of things provided for in the Mind which has perfection in itself, but along with their nature their well-being, so that whatever this bow shoots falls fitted for a provided end, as a shaft directed to its mark. If it were not so the

heavens in which thou journeyest would produce such effects as would not be things of art but of confusion; and that cannot be unless the Intelligences that move the stars are defective, and defective also the Primal Intelligence which has not made them perfect.[14] Wilt thou have this truth made clearer to thee?'

And I: 'No, truly, for I see it to be impossible that nature should fail in what is needful.'

He continued therefore: 'Now tell me, would it be worse for man on earth if he were not a citizen?'

'Yes,' I replied 'and here I ask no proof.'

'And can he be unless men below live in diverse ways for diverse tasks? Not if your master[15] writes well of this.'

When he had brought the argument to this point, he then concluded: 'The roots of your activities, therefore, must be diverse, so that one is born Solon and another Xerxes, one Melchizedek and another he that flew through the air and lost his son.[16] Circling nature, which is a seal on the mortal wax, plies its art well, but does not distinguish one house from another; whence it happens that Esau differs in the seed from Jacob, and Quirinus comes from so base a father that he is ascribed to Mars.[17] The begotten nature would always take a like course with its begetters if Divine Providence did not overrule.

'Now what was behind is before thee. But that thou mayst know the pleasure I have in thee, take a corollary for a cloak about thee. Always, if nature meets with fortune unsuited to it, like any kind of seed out of its own region, it has ill success, and if the world below gave its mind to the foundation that nature lays and followed it, it would be well

for its people. But you wrest to religion one born to gird on the sword, and you make a king of one that is fit for sermons, so that your track is off the road.'

CANTO IX

Cunizza; Folco; repentance transformed to praise; Rahab

AFTER thy Charles, fair Clemence,[1] had enlightened me, he told me of the treacheries his seed was to suffer, but said: 'Be silent, and let the years revolve'; so that I can say nothing but that deserved sorrows shall follow on your wrongs. And already the living soul of that holy light had turned to the Sun that fills it, as to the good that is sufficient for all things. Ah, souls beguiled, creatures without reverence, who from such a good turn away your hearts, directing your brows to vanity!

And lo, another of those splendours moved towards me and by brightening without signified its wish to please me; and the eyes of Beatrice, which rested on me as before, gave me assurance of her dear assent to my desire.

'Pray, bring to my wish speedy fulfilment, blest spirit,' I said 'and give me proof that what I think I can reflect on thee.'[2]

The light, therefore, which was yet strange to me, continued from out of its depth where it was singing before, as one rejoicing to do a kindness: 'In that part of the depraved land of Italy that lies between the Rialto and the springs of the Brenta and the Piave rises a hill of no great height from which once descended a firebrand that made a

great assault on the country round. I and he sprang from one root. Cunizza I was called,[3] and I shine here because the light of this star overcame me; but I gladly pardon in myself the reason of my lot, and it does not grieve me,—which may seem strange, perhaps, to your crowd. Of this brilliant and precious jewel of our heaven that is beside me great fame was left, and before it dies away this hundredth year will come again five times;[4] consider then if man should not make himself excel so that the first life may leave another after it. Of this the present rabble enclosed by the Tagliamento and the Adige have no thought, nor for all their scourgings do they yet repent; but the time will soon be here when Padua, because her people are obstinate against their duty, will stain at the marsh the waters that bathe Vicenza,[5] and where the Sile and the Cagnano flow together one lords it and goes with his head high for whom is made already the net to take him.[6] Feltre shall yet bewail the perfidy of her godless shepherd, which shall be so foul that for the like none ever entered Malta. Great indeed would be the vat that should receive the blood of the Ferrarese and weary he that should weigh it out ounce by ounce, which this courteous priest will pay to show himself of the Party; and such gifts will suit the country's ways.[7] Above are mirrors—you call them Thrones— and from them God in judgement shines upon us, so that we think it right to say such things.'[8]

Here she was silent and appeared to me to have turned to other things as she joined the ring where she was before.

The other joy, which was already known to me as precious, became in my sight like a fine ruby on which the sun is striking; there above brightness

is gained by joy, as laughter here, but below the shade darkens outwardly when the mind is sad.

'God sees all,' I said 'and thy seeing, blest spirit, is in Him, so that no wish can hide itself from thee. Why then does thy voice, which ever delights heaven together with the song of those devout fires that have made their cowl of six wings,[9] not satisfy my desires? I would not await thy question if I were in thee as thou art in me.'

'The greatest valley into which the water spreads from the sea that encircles the world' he began then 'extends so far between its discordant shores against the sun's course that it makes the meridian at the place where before it made the horizon.[10] I was a dweller on that valley's shore between the Ebro and the Magra, whose short course separates the Genoese from the Tuscan; and with almost the same sunset and sunrise lie Bugia and the city whence I came, which once made the harbour warm with its own blood.[11] Folco the people called me to whom my name was known, and this heaven bears the stamp of me as I did of it; for the daughter of Belus did not burn more, wronging both Sychaeus and Creusa, than I, as long as it befitted my locks, not she of Rhodope who was deceived by Demophoon, nor Alcides when he clasped Iole to his heart.[13] Yet here we do not repent; nay, we smile, not for our fault, which does not come back to mind, but for the Power which ordained and foresaw. Here we contemplate the art that makes beautiful the great result, and discern the good for which the world above wheels about the world below.

'But, that thou mayst take with thee all the desires fulfilled that are born in this sphere, I must continue still further. Thou wouldst know who is in this radiance that so sparkles here beside me, like a sunbeam in clear water. Know then that within it Rahab is at peace,[14] and, since she is joined by our order, it is sealed with her in its highest rank; by this heaven, where the shadow ends that is cast by your world, she was taken up before any other soul of Christ's triumph. It was indeed fitting to leave her in some heaven as a trophy of the lofty victory that was gained with the one and the other palm,[15] because she favoured Joshua's first glory in Holy Land—a place that little touches the Pope's memory.[16]

'Thy city, which is a plant of his who first turned his back on his Maker and from whose envy comes such lamentation, brings forth and spreads the accursed flower that has led astray the sheep and the lambs, for it has made a wolf of the shepherd.[17] For this the Gospel and the great Doctors are neglected and only the Decretals[18] are studied, as may be seen by their margins. To this Popes and Cardinals devote themselves. Their thoughts do not go to Nazareth, whither Gabriel spread his wings. But the Vatican and the other chosen parts of Rome which were the burial-place of the soldiery that followed Peter will soon be freed from that adultery.'

CANTO X

The Sphere of the Sun; the wise; the First Circle; St Thomas Aquinas

LOOKING on His Son with the Love which the One and the Other eternally breathe forth, the primal and ineffable Power made with such order all that revolves in mind or space that he who contemplates it cannot but taste of Him.[1] Lift up thine eyes with me then, reader, to the lofty wheels, directing them on that part where the one motion strikes the other,[2] and from that point take thy pleasure in the art of the Master, who so loves it in His heart that His eye never leaves it. See how from there the circle branches obliquely that bears the planets to satisfy the world which calls for them. And if their track were not aslant much virtue in the heavens would be vain and almost every potency down here dead, and if it parted farther or less far from the straight course much would be lacking both above and below[3] in the order of the world.

Stay now, reader, on thy bench, thinking over this of which thou hast a foretaste, and thou shalt have much delight before thou art weary; I have set before thee, now feed thyself, for the theme of which I am made the scribe bends to itself all my care.

The greatest minister of nature, which stamps the world with heavenly worth and with its light measures time for us, being in conjunction with the part I have noted, was wheeling through the spirals in which it presents itself earlier every day;[4] and I was with it but was not aware of the ascent any more than one is aware of the beginning of a thought before it comes. It is Beatrice who thus leads from good to better so instantly that her action has no measurement in time.

How shining in itself must have been that which was within the Sun as I entered it, showing not by colour but by light! Were I to summon genius and skill and practice I should never tell of it so that it might be imagined, but we can believe it, and let us long for the sight; and if our imagination is too low for such a height it is no wonder, for never did eye see light greater than the Sun. Such was there the fourth family of the Father on high, who ever satisfies it, showing how He breathes forth and how begets.[5]

And Beatrice began: 'Give thanks, give thanks to the Sun of the angels, who to this visible one has raised thee by His grace.'

Never was heart of mortal so ready for worship or so swift to yield itself to God with its whole assent as I became at these words, and all my love was so set on Him that it eclipsed Beatrice in forgetfulness; nor did this displease her, but she smiled at it so that the splendour of her smiling eyes broke up the absorption of my mind and divided it on many objects. I saw many flashing lights of surpassing brightness make of us a centre and of themselves a crown, sweeter in their voices than shining in their aspect; thus girdled we some-

times see Latona's daughter when the air is charged so that it retains the thread that makes her zone.[6] In the court of heaven from which I have returned many gems are found of such worth and beauty that they may not be taken out of the kingdom, and of these was the song of those lights. He that does not take wings to fly up thither may wait for news thence from the dumb! When, singing thus, these burning suns had circled round us three times, like stars near the steadfast poles, they appeared to me like ladies not freed from the dance, but pausing in silence and listening till they have caught the new strain;[7] and within one of them I heard begin: 'Since the beam of grace by which true love is kindled and which then grows by loving shines so multiplied in thee that it brings thee up that stair which none descends but to mount again, he that should refuse to thy thirst the wine from his vessel would be no more at liberty than water that does not fall to the sea. Thou wouldst know what plants are these that bloom in this garland which surrounds with looks of love the fair lady who strengthens thee for heaven. I was of the lambs of the holy flock that Dominic leads on the path where there is good fattening if they do not stray; he that is next beside me on the right was my brother and master, and he is Albert of Cologne and I Thomas of Aquino. If thou wouldst be thus informed of all the rest, follow after my words with thine eyes, going round the blessed wreath. That next flame comes from the smile of Gratian, who served the one and the other court so well that it gives pleasure in Paradise; the

other who next adorns our choir was that Peter who, like the poor widow, offered his treasure to Holy Church. The fifth light, which is the most beautiful among us, breathes from such a love that all the world below hungers for news of it; within it is the lofty mind to which was given wisdom so deep that, if the truth be true, there never arose a second of such vision.[8] Beside it see the light of that candle which below in the flesh saw farthest into the nature and the ministry of the angels. In the little light that is next smiles that defender of Christian times of whose treatise Augustine made use. If now thou art bringing thy mind's eye from light to light after my praises, thou art already left eager for the eighth. Within it rejoices in the vision of all good the holy soul who makes plain the world's deceitfulness to one that hears him rightly; the body from which he was driven lies below in Cieldauro, and he came from martyrdom and exile to this peace. See, flaming beyond, the glowing breath of Isidore, of Bede, and of Richard who in contemplation was more than man. This one from whom thy look returns to me is the light of a spirit to whom, in his grave thoughts, death seemed slow in coming; it is the eternal light of Siger, who, lecturing in the Street of Straw, demonstrated invidious truths.'[9]

Then, like a clock that calls us at the hour when the bride of God[10] rises to sing matins to the Bridegroom that he may love her, when one part draws or drives another, sounding the chime with notes so sweet that the well-ordered spirit swells with

love, so I saw the glorious wheel move and render voice to voice with harmony and sweetness that cannot be known but there where joy becomes eternal.

CANTO XI

The story of St Francis; the decadence of the Dominicans

O INSENSATE care of mortals, how vain are the reasonings that make thee beat thy wings in downward flight! One was going after law, another after the *Aphorisms*,[1] one following the priesthood and another seeking to rule by force or craft, one set on robbery and another on affairs of state, one labouring in the toils of fleshly delights and another given up to idleness; while I, set free from all these things, was high in heaven with Beatrice, received thus gloriously.

When each had come back to the point of the circle where it was before, it stopped, like a candle on its stand, and within that radiance that had already spoken to me I heard begin, while it smiled and turned brighter: 'Even as I reflect its beams, so, gazing into the Eternal Light, I perceive thy thoughts and the cause of them. Thou art perplexed and wouldst have my words made clearer, in plain and explicit terms on the level of thy understanding, when I said before "Where there is good fattening", and again where I said "There never arose a second"; and here it is necessary to make a clear distinction.

'The Providence that rules the world with that counsel in which every created sight is vanquished before it reaches the bottom—in order that the bride of Him who, with loud cries,[2] wedded her with His sacred blood should go to her Beloved secure in herself and faithfuller to Him—ordained for her behoof two princes to be her guides on this side and on that. The one was all seraphic in ardour; the other, for wisdom, was on earth a splendour of cherubic light.[3] I shall tell of the one, since to praise one, whichever we take, is to speak of both; for their labours were to one end.

'Between the Topino and the water that falls from the hill chosen by the blessed Ubaldo hangs a fertile slope of the lofty mountain from which Perugia feels cold and heat at Porta Sole, and behind it Nocera and Gualdo grieve under a heavy yoke.[4] From this slope, where it most breaks its steepness, a sun rose on the world, as this does sometimes from the Ganges; therefore let him who makes mention of that place not say *Ascesi*, for he would say too little, but *Orient*, if he would name it rightly.[5] He was not yet far from his rising when he began to make the earth feel some strengthening from his mighty influence; for, still a youth, he ran into strife with his father for a lady to whom, as to death, none willingly unlocks the door, and before his spiritual court *et coram patre* he was joined to her, and thenceforth loved her better every day.[6] She, bereft of her first husband,[7] despised and obscure eleven hundred years and more, remained without a suitor till he came; nor

did it avail when men heard that he who put all the world in fear found her unmoved, with Amyclas, at the sound of his voice;[8] nor did it avail her to have such courage and constancy that, where Mary stayed below, she mounted on the cross with Christ. But, lest I proceed too darkly, take now Francis and Poverty for these lovers in all I have said. Their harmony and happy looks moved men to love and wonder and sweet contemplation and led them to holy thoughts, so that the venerable Bernard first went barefoot and ran after that great peace and, running, thought himself too slow. O wealth unknown and fruitful good! Barefoot goes Giles, barefoot goes Sylvester, after the bridegroom, so greatly does the bride delight them. Then that father and master went on his way with his lady and with that family which now was bound with the lowly cord; nor did cowardice of heart weigh down his brow for being Pietro Bernardone's son nor for appearing an object of wonder and contempt, but royally he opened his stern resolve to Innocent and had from him the first seal upon his order.[9] When the company of Poor Brothers increased behind him whose wondrous life were better sung in heaven's glory, the holy purpose of this chief shepherd was encircled with a second crown by the Eternal Spirit through Honorius.[10] And when, in thirst for martyrdom, he had preached Christ and them that followed Him in the proud presence of the Sultan, and, finding the people unripe for conversion and not being willing to remain for no purpose, he had returned to the harvest of the

Italian fields, then, on the rough crag between Tiber and Arno, he received from Christ the last seal, which his members bore for two years.[11] When He that had destined him to so much good was pleased to take him up to the reward he had won by making himself lowly, to his brothers, as to the rightful heirs, he commended his most dear lady and bade them love her faithfully; and from her bosom the glorious soul chose to set forth, returning to its kingdom, and for its body would have no other bier.[12]

'Consider now what he was that was his fit colleague to keep Peter's bark on the right course in the high sea, and such was our Patriarch;[13] from which thou mayst perceive that he who follows him as he commands carries good merchandise. But his flock has grown so greedy of new fare that it must needs scatter through wild pastures, and the farther his sheep go wandering from him the emptier of milk they return to the fold. Some there are, indeed, that for fear of harm keep close to the shepherd, but they are so few that little stuff serves for their cowls.

'If now my words are not obscure and if thy listening has been intent, if thou recall to mind what I said, thy desire shall in part be satisfied and thou shalt see how the plant is wasted and what is meant by the rebuke, "Where there is good fattening if they do not stray".'

CANTO XII

The Second Circle; St Bonaventura; the story of St Dominic; the decadence of the Franciscans

As soon as the blessed flame took up the last word the holy millstone began to turn, and it had not made a full circle before another enclosed it round and matched motion with motion and song with song, song which as far surpassed our Muses and our Sirens in those sweet pipes as a first splendour its reflection. As two bows parallel and of like colours bend through thin cloud when Juno commands her handmaid,[1] the outer born of the inner—like the voice of that wandering nymph whom love consumed as the sun does vapours[2]—, and make the people here presage, because of the covenant God made with Noah, that the world will never again be flooded; thus the two wreaths of those eternal roses circled round us and thus the farther answered to the nearer.

When the dance and all the great festival of both song and flames, light with light joyful and gracious, stopped together at one moment and with one consent, just as eyes moved with one impulse must needs close and open together, from the heart of one of the new lights came a voice which made me seem the needle to the star as I turned to its place;[3] and it began: 'The love that makes me fair

draws me to speak of the other leader, on whose behalf so much good is spoken here of mine; it is fitting that where the one is the other should be brought in, so that, as they fought for one end, their glory should shine together.

'Christ's army, which cost so dear to rearm, was moving, slow, doubtful and few, behind the standard, when the Emperor who reigns eternally took thought for His soldiers in their peril—only of His grace, not for their deserving—and, as was said, succoured His bride by two champions at whose deeds and words the scattered people rallied.

'In that part where sweet Zephyr rises to open the new leaves in which Europe sees herself reclad, not far from the beating of the waves behind which the sun, after his long flight, sometimes hides himself from all men, lies favoured Calahorra under protection of the great shield in which the lion is subject and sovereign.[4] In it was born the loving liegeman of the Christian faith, the holy athlete, gracious to his own and pitiless to enemies; and his mind, as soon as it was created, was so full of living power that in his mother's womb it made her prophetic.[5] When the espousals between him and the faith were completed at the holy font where they dowered each other with mutual salvation, the lady who gave the assent for him saw in her sleep the marvellous fruit that should spring from him and from his heirs;[6] and, that he might be expressly that which he was indeed, there went forth hence a spirit to name him by the possessive of Him whose he was completely.[7]

He was called Dominic, and I speak of him as of the labourer whom Christ chose to help Him in His garden. He seemed indeed a messenger and of the household of Christ; for the first love that was manifest in him was for the first counsel given by Christ.[8] Many a time his nurse found him silent and awake on the ground, as if he said "For this am I come".[9] O father of him, Felice indeed! O mother of him, Giovanna indeed, if, interpreted, it means what they say![10] Not for the world, for which men now toil after the Ostian and Taddeo,[11] but for love of the true manna, he became in a short time so great a teacher that he began to go round the vineyard, which soon withers if the keeper is at fault; and to the seat which is now less kind to the upright poor than once it was—not in itself, but in him who sits there degenerate[12]—he appealed, not that he might dispense two or three for six,[13] not for the chance of the first vacancy, *non decimas, quae sunt pauperum Dei*,[14] but for leave to fight with the erring world for the seed of which twenty-four plants encircle thee.[15] Then, with both learning and zeal and with the apostolic office, he went forth like a torrent driven from a high spring, and on the heretic thickets his force struck with most vigour where the resistance was stubbornest.[16] From him there sprang then various streams by which the Catholic garden is watered, so that its saplings have new life.

'If such was the one wheel of the chariot in which Holy Church defended herself and overcame in the field her civil strife, surely the excellence of the

other must be very plain to thee, about which, before I came, Thomas was so courteous. But the track made by the topmost part of its rim is abandoned, so that there is mould where there was crust.[17] His family, which started out straight forward with their feet in his footprints, is so turned about that it throws back him in front on him behind; and soon will be seen some harvest of the bad tillage, when the tares shall complain that the bin is refused to them.[18] I admit, indeed, that he that should search our volume leaf by leaf would still find a page where he might read, "I am what I always was",[19] but it will not be from Casale or from Acquasparta, where such readers come to the Rule that the one shirks and the other narrows it.[20]

'I am the living soul of Bonaventura of Bagnorea, who in great offices ever put last the left-hand care.[21] Here are Illuminato and Augustine, who were among the first barefoot Poor Brothers that in the cord made themselves God's friends; Hugh of St Victor is here with them, and Peter the Bookworm, and Peter the Spaniard who shines below in twelve books; Nathan the prophet, and Chrysostom the Metropolitan, and Anselm, and that Donatus who deigned to set his hand to the first art; Rabanus is here, and beside me shines the Calabrian Abbot Joachim, who was endowed with a spirit of prophecy.[22]

'The glowing courtesy and well-judged language of Brother Thomas have moved me to celebrate so great a paladin,[23] and with me have moved this company.'

CANTO XIII

Creation perfect in Adam and in Christ; Solomon's gift of kingly understanding; warning against hasty judgements

LET him imagine, who would rightly understand what I saw now—and let him hold the image, while I speak, firm as a rock—, fifteen stars that quicken various regions of the sky with such brightness as overcomes every obstruction in the air; let him imagine that Wain for which the bosom of our sky suffices night and day so that in the turning of its pole it is not diminished; let him imagine the mouth of the Horn that begins at the end of the axle on which the first wheel revolves,[1]—and all these to have made of themselves two constellations in heaven such as the daughter of Minos made when she felt the chill of death,[2] and the one to have its beams within the other, and both to revolve in such a manner that the one goes first and the other after. Then he will have as it were a shadow of the real constellation and of the double dance that circled round the point where I was; for it is as far beyond our experience as the motion of the heaven that outstrips all the rest is beyond the motion of the Chiana.[3] There they sang, not Bacchus and no Paean,[4] but three Persons in the divine nature, and in one Person that nature and the human.

When the singing and the circling had completed their measure these holy lights gave heed to us, rejoicing to pass from care to care. Then the light within which the wondrous life of the Poor Man of God was told me broke the silence among the divine concordant souls, and he said: 'Since the one sheaf is threshed and its grain now garnered, sweet charity bids me beat out the other.[5] Thou believest that into the breast from which the rib was taken to form her fair face whose palate cost all the world dear,—and into that, pierced by the spear, which gave satisfaction for both past and future such as outweighs in the balance every fault, all the light that is allowed to human nature was infused by the Power which made the one and the other; and therefore thou marvellest at what I said before when I told thee that the excellence which is enclosed in the fifth light never had a second.[6] Open now thine eyes to the answer I give thee and thou shalt see that thy belief and my words meet in the truth as the centre of the circle.

'That which dies not and that which can die are nothing but the splendour of that Idea which our Sire, in Loving, begets; for that living Light which so streams from its shining Source that it is not parted from it nor from the Love which with them makes the Three, of its own goodness gathers its beams, as it were mirrored, in nine subsistences, remaining forever one.[7] Thence it descends to the last potencies, passing down from act to act and becoming such that it makes nothing more than brief contingencies; and by these contingencies I mean things generated with or without seed, which the heavens by their motions produce. The

wax of these things and that which moulds it are not always in the same state, and therefore beneath the stamp of the idea the light then shines through more and less; hence it comes that trees of one and the same species bear better and worse fruit and you are born with different talents.[8] If the wax were moulded perfectly and the heavens were at the height of their power, all the brightness of the seal would be seen; but nature always gives it defectively, working like the artist who has the skill of his art and a hand that trembles. But if the burning Love moves the clear Vision of the primal Power and makes of that its seal, all perfection is attained there. Thus, once, was the dust made fit for all the perfection of a living creature, and thus was the Virgin made to be with child; so that I approve thy judgement that nature never was nor shall be what it was in these two persons.[9] Now, if I went no farther, "How, then, was that other without an equal?" would be thy first words. But, to make quite clear what is obscure to thee, think who he was and what moved him to his petition when he was bidden "Ask". I have not spoken so darkly but that thou canst see that he was a king, who asked for wisdom that he might be fit to be a king,[10] not to know the number of the movers here above, nor if *necesse* with a contingent ever made *necesse*,[11] nor *si est dare primum motum esse*,[12] nor if a triangle can be made in the semicircle so that it has no right angle.[13] Therefore, if thou note this along with what I said, royal wisdom is that unmatched vision on which the arrow of my intention strikes; and if thou have

careful regard to "arose" thou wilt see it to have sole reference to kings,—who are many, and the good ones rare. Take my words with this distinction, and they can stand then with what thou believest of the first father and of our Beloved.[14]

'And let this always be lead on thy feet to make thee slow, like a weary man, in moving either to the yea or the nay where thou dost not see clearly; for he ranks very low among the fools, in the one case as in the other, who affirms or denies without distinguishing, since it often happens that a hasty opinion inclines to the wrong side and then the feelings bind the intellect. Far worse than in vain he casts off from the shore, for he does not return the same as he sets out, who fishes for the truth without the art. And of this manifest proofs to the world are Parmenides, Melissus, Bryson,[15] and many who knew not whither they went; so were Sabellius and Arius[16] and these fools who were to the Scriptures like swords that give back the natural face distorted.

'So also let not the people be too sure in judging, like those that reckon the corn in the field before it is ripe. For I have seen the briar first show harsh and rigid all through the winter and later bear the rose upon its top, and once I saw a ship that ran straight and swift over the sea through all its course perish at the last entering the harbour. Let not Dame Bertha and Master Martin, when they see one rob and another make an offering, think they see them within the divine counsel; for the one may rise and the other fall.'

CANTO XIV

The resurrection of the body; the Third Circle; the Sphere of Mars; the courageous; the cross of souls

FROM centre to rim, and again from rim to centre, the water in a round vessel moves, according as it is struck from without or within; this, as I tell it, dropped suddenly into my mind as soon as the glorious living soul of Thomas was silent, by the likeness that sprang from his speech and that of Beatrice, who was pleased to begin thus after him: 'This man has need, and does not tell you of it either by word or as yet in thought, to search into another truth. Tell him if the light with which your substance blooms will remain with you in eternity as it is now, and, if it remains, tell him how it is possible after you are made visible again that it should not be painful to your sight.'[1]

As, impelled and drawn by increase of happiness, dancers in a round raise their voices all together and quicken their steps, so at the eager and devout petition the holy circles showed new joy in their wheeling and in their wondrous song. Whoso laments that we die here to live above has not seen there the refreshment from the eternal showers. That

One and Two and Three who ever lives and ever reigns in Three and in Two and in One[2] and uncircumscribed circumscribes all, was sung three times by every one of these spirits in such a strain as would be fit reward for every merit. And I heard in the divinest light of the lesser circle[3] a gentle voice, such perhaps as the angel's to Mary, reply: 'As long as the feast of Paradise shall last, so long our love shall radiate this vesture about us. Its brightness answers to our ardour, the ardour to our vision, and that is in the measure each has of grace beyond his merit. When the flesh, glorified and holy, shall be put on again, our person shall be more acceptable for being all complete, so that the light freely granted to us by the Supreme Goodness shall increase, light which fits us to see Him; from that must vision increase, the ardour increase that is kindled by it, the radiance increase which comes from that. But like a coal that gives flame and with its white glow outshines it so that its own appearance is preserved, so this effulgence that now surrounds us will be surpassed in brightness by the flesh which the earth still covers. Nor will such light have power to trouble us, for the organs of the body shall be strong for all that can delight us.'[4]

So quick and eager seemed to me both the one and the other choir to say *Amen* that they plainly showed their desire for their dead bodies,—not perhaps for themselves alone, but for their mothers, for their fathers, and for the others who were dear before they became eternal flames.

And lo, all round and all of equal brightness, rose a lustre surpassing what was there, like a brightening horizon. And just as on the approach of evening new lights begin to show through the sky so that the sight seems and seems not real, it seemed to me that I began to see there new spirits making a ring beyond the other two circles. Ah, very sparkling of the Holy Ghost! How suddenly glowing it became to my eyes, which were overcome and could not bear it! But Beatrice showed herself to me so fair and smiling, it must be left among those sights that did not follow my memory. From this my eyes recovered strength to raise themselves again, and I saw myself translated, alone with my Lady, to higher blessedness.

I was well assured that I had risen higher by the enkindled smile of the star, which seemed to me more ruddy than its wont.[5] With all my heart and in that tongue which is one for all I made such a whole burnt-offering to God as befitted the new grace; and the burning of the sacrifice was not yet completed in my breast when I knew that offering to be accepted and propitious, for splendours of such brightness and so ruddy appeared to me within two beams that I said: 'O Divine Sun that dost so glorify them!' As the Galaxy, pricked out with greater and lesser lights, whitens between the poles of the universe so that it perplexes the wisest,[6] these beams, thus constellated, made in the depth of Mars the venerable sign which the meeting of the quadrants makes in a circle.[7] Here my memory defeats my skill, for that cross so flamed forth Christ that I can find for it no fit comparison;

but he that takes up his cross and follows Christ shall yet forgive me for what I leave untold, when he sees Christ flash in that dawn. From horn to horn and between the summit and the base lights were moving that sparkled brightly as they met and passed; so we see here, direct and aslant, swift and slow, changing appearance, the particles of matter, long and short, move through the beam which sometimes streaks the shade that men devise for their protection with cunning and skill. And as viol and harp strung with many chords in harmony chime sweetly for one who does not catch the tune, so from the lights that appeared to me there a melody gathered through the cross which held me rapt though I did not follow the hymn. I perceived, indeed, that it was of high praises, for there came to me 'Arise' and 'Conquer', as one hears without understanding; by which I was so moved to love that till then nothing had bound me with so sweet a chain.

My words, perhaps, seem too bold, making less of my delight in the fair eyes looking into which my desire finds rest; but he who takes note that these living seals of all beauty have more power with each ascent and that I had not there turned to them again may excuse me in that for which I accuse to excuse myself and may see that I speak truth; for that holy delight is not here excluded, since it becomes purer as we rise.

CANTO XV

Cacciaguida; ancient Florence

GRACIOUS will, into which rightly-breathing love always resolves itself, as does cupidity into ill-will, imposed silence on that sweet lyre and stilled the sacred strings which the right hand of heaven tightens and relaxes. How shall these spirits be deaf to righteous prayers who, to prompt me to beg of them, became silent with one consent? Well may he grieve without end who robs himself eternally of that love for love of what does not endure.

As through the still and cloudless evening sky runs at times a sudden fire, catching the eyes that were unheeding, and seems a star changing its place but that from the part where it kindles none is missing and it lasts but a moment; so from the horn that extends on the right ran to the foot of that cross a star of the resplendent constellation that is there. And the gem did not leave its ribbon, but ran across by the radial strip and seemed fire behind alabaster. With such affection did Anchises' shade reach out, if we may trust our greatest muse, when in Elysium he knew his son.[1]

'O sanguis meus, o superinfusa gratia Dei, sicut tibi cui bis unquam coeli janua reclusa?'[2] That light spoke thus; therefore I gave heed to it, then turned my eyes again to my Lady; and on the one hand and on the other I was amazed, for within her eyes glowed such a smile that I thought I touched with mine the depth of my grace and of my paradise.

Then, a joy to hearing and to sight, the spirit added to his first words things I did not comprehend, so deep was his speech; nor did he conceal himself from me by choice but by necessity, for his conceiving was set above the mark of mortals. And when the bow of burning love was so relaxed that his speech came down towards the mark of our intellect, the first thing I understood was: 'Blessed be Thou, three-fold and one, who showest such favour to my seed!' And he continued: 'Happy and long craving, drawn from the reading of the great volume where there is never change of black or white,[3] thou hast satisfied, my son, within this light in which I speak to thee, thanks to her who clad thee with wings for the lofty flight. Thou believest that thy thought flows forth to me from Him who is the First, even as from the unit, when it is known, radiate the five and six,[4] and therefore thou dost not ask me who I am and why I appear to thee more joyful than any other in this happy throng. Thou believest rightly, for small and great in this life gaze into the mirror in which, before thou thinkest, thou makest plain the thought.[5] But, that the holy love in which I keep watch with constant vision and which makes me thirst with sweet desire may be better satisfied, let thy voice, confident, bold and

joyful, sound forth the will and the longing to which already my answer is decreed.'

I turned to Beatrice, and she heard before I spoke and smiled to me a sign that made the wings grow on my will; then I began: 'Love and intelligence, as soon as the Primal Equality was plain to you, became equally poised in each of you, since the Sun that illumined and warmed you with its heat and light has such equality that all comparisons came short of it. But will and faculty in mortals, for the reason that is plain to you, are not equally feathered in their wings, so that I, who am mortal, feel in myself this inequality and therefore can only give thanks with the heart for thy paternal greeting.[6] But I beseech thee, living topaz who art a gem in this rich jewel, that thou satisfy me with thy name.'

'O my branch, in whom I rejoiced only expecting thee, I was thy root.'[7] Thus he began his answer to me, then said: 'He from whom thy house is named and who for a hundred years and more has gone round the mountain on the first terrace was my son and thy great-grandfather; it is most fitting that thou shouldst shorten his long labour with thy good offices.[8]

'Florence, within her ancient circle from which she still takes tierce and nones[9], abode in peace, sober and chaste. She had no bracelet, no tiara, no embroidered gowns, no girdle that should be seen more than the wearer. Not yet did the daughter at her birth put the father in fear, for age and dowry did not part from the due measure on the one side and the other.[10] She had no houses empty of

family, nor had Sardanapalus yet come there to show what could be done in the chamber.[11] Not yet did your Uccellatoio surpass Montemario, which, surpassed in its rise, shall be too in its fall.[12] Bellincion Berti[13] I saw go girt with leather and bone, and his lady come from the mirror with unpainted face, and I saw dei Nerli and del Vecchio content in plain buff and their ladies at the spindle and flax. O favoured women! Each was sure of her burial-place and was not yet deserted in her bed for France.[14] One kept watch, tending the cradle, and, soothing her child, would use the tongue that first delights fathers and mothers; another, drawing the tresses from the distaff, would tell among her family tales of the Trojans, of Fiesole and Rome. A Cianghella, a Lapo Salterello, would have been held as great a wonder then as now would Cincinnatus and Cornelia.[15] To a citizen's life so peaceful and so fair, to a community so loyal, to so sweet a dwelling-place, Mary gave me when called on with loud cries, and in your ancient Baptistery I became at once Christian and Cacciaguida. Moronto was my brother, and Eliseo. My wife came to me from the valley of the Po, and from her was taken thy surname. Later, I followed the Emperor Conrad, and he girded me of his knighthood, so greatly did I win his favour by good service; I went after him against the iniquity of that law whose people, by fault of the shepherds, usurp

your right.[16] There I was set free by that foul race from the entanglements of the deceitful world the love of which corrupts many souls, and came from martyrdom to this peace.'

CANTO XVI

Family pride; the decline of great Florentine families

O OUR poor nobility of blood, if thou makest men glory in thee here below, where our affections languish, it will never be a thing for me to wonder at; for there, where appetite is not warped, in Heaven itself, I gloried in thee. Truly thou art a mantle that quickly shrinks, so that if we do not add to it day by day time goes round it with the shears.

With the *you* which Rome was the first to allow and in which her children least persevere[1] I began again to speak; at which Beatrice, who stood a little apart, seemed by her smile like her who coughed at the first fault written of Guinevere.[2] I began: 'You are my father, you give me all boldness to speak, you uplift me so that I am more than myself; by so many streams my mind is filled with happiness that it rejoices in itself that it can bear it without bursting. Tell me then, dear stock from which I spring, what were your ancestors and what years were chronicled in your boyhood; tell me of the sheepfold of Saint John,[3] how large it was then and what families in it were worthy of its chief seats.'

As coal quickens to flame in a breath of wind, so I saw that light kindle at my words of affection; and as it became more fair in my sight, so with a voice sweeter and gentler, but not in this modern speech, he said to me: 'From that day when *Ave* was spoken till the birth by which my mother, who is now blest, was lightened of her burden of me, this fire came to its Lion five hundred and fifty-three times to be re-kindled under its paw.[4] My ancestors and I were born at the place where the furthest ward is reached by the runner in your yearly games. Let it suffice thee to hear thus much of my forebears; as to who they were and whence they came it is more fitting to be silent than to speak. All who were there at that time between Mars and the Baptist[5] able to bear arms were a fifth of the number now living, but the citizenship, which is now mixed with Campi and Certaldo and Figline,[6] was seen pure in the humblest artisan. Ah, how much better would it be to have these people I name for neighbours, with your bounds at Galluzzo and Trespiano, than to have them inside and to endure the stench of the boor from Aguglion and of him from Signa who already has a sharp eye for jobbery![7] If the people that of all the world are most degenerate had not been a stepmother to Caesar, but kind like a mother to her son, there is one turned Florentine that trucks and trades who would be sent back to Semifonte, where his grandfather went a-begging, Montemurlo would still belong to the Counts, the Cerchi would be in Acone Parish and the Buondelmonti perhaps in Valdi-

greve.[8] The mixture of peoples was ever the beginning of the city's ills, as food in excess is of the body's, and a blind bull falls more headlong than a blind lamb, and often one sword cuts more and better than five. If thou consider Luni and Urbisaglia, how they are gone, and how Chiusi and Senigallia are going after them,[9] then to hear how families come to naught will not seem to thee a thing new or strange, since the cities have an end. All your affairs are mortal, even as yourselves, but in some things that last long this is concealed, and lives are short; and as the turning of the moon's heaven covers and lays bare the shores unceasingly, so fortune does with Florence. It should not therefore seem a marvellous thing that I have to tell of the great Florentines whose fame is hid by time. I saw the Ughi, I saw the Catellini, Filippi, Greci, Ormanni and Alberichi, illustrious citizens already in decline, and I saw, as great as they were ancient, dell' Arca with della Sannella, and Soldanieri and Ardinghi and Bostichi. Over the gate which today is loaded with such a weight of unheard-of perfidy that there will soon be shipwreck of the bark were the Ravignani, of whose line is Count Guido and all that have since taken their name from the great Bellincion.[10] Della Pressa knew already how to rule, and Galigaio already had in his house the gilded hilt and pommel.[11] Great already was the pale of vair,[12] the Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti and Barucci and Galli, and those that blush for the

bushel.[13] The stock from which the Calfucci sprang was already great, and already were brought to the seats of office Sizii and Arrigucci. Ah, how great I saw those who now are undone by their pride;[14] and the golden balls flowered Florence in all her great doings.[15] So did the fathers of those who, whenever your church is vacant, fatten themselves by sitting in council.[16] The insolent breed that plays the dragon behind him that flees and is mild as a lamb to him that shows his teeth—or else his purse—was already on the rise, but of mean stock, so that it did not please Ubertino Donato when his father-in-law made him their kinsman.[17] Already Caponsacco had come down from Fiesole to the market-place, and already Giuda and Infangato were citizens of repute. One thing I will tell incredible and true: the inner circle used to be entered by a gate that was named from the della Pera.[18] Everyone bearing the noble arms of the great Baron whose name and praise the feast of Thomas renews had from him knighthood and privilege, though he that decks it with a border sides today with the people.[19] Already there were Gualterotti and Importuni, and the Borgo would still be quieter if they had been spared new neighbours.[20] The house from which your tears have sprung, through the just resentment that has brought death among you and made an end of your happy life, was honoured, it and its associates.[21] O Buondelmonte, how ill for thee that thou didst fly from its nuptials at another's bidding! Many would be happy that are sorrowful if God had given thee up to the Ema the first time thou camest to the city;[22] but it was

fitting that to that wasted stone which guards the bridge Florence should offer a victim in her last days of peace.

'With these families, and with others besides, I saw Florence in such tranquillity that she had nothing to cause her grief; with these I saw her people so glorious and so just that the lily had never been reversed on the spear, nor by dissension changed to red.'[23]

CANTO XVII

Dante's future; Can Grande; Cacciaguida's charge to Dante

LIKE him who came to Clymene to be reassured about that which he had heard against himself, him who still makes fathers wary with their sons,[1] such was I and such I was perceived to be both by Beatrice and by the holy lamp that had changed its place for me before. Therefore my Lady said to me: 'Put forth the flame of thy desire, so that it may issue marked clearly with the internal stamp, not to add to our knowledge by thy words, but to practise the telling of thy thirst, so that the draught may be poured out for thee.'

'O my dear seed-plot, who art raised so high that, even as earthly minds see that there cannot be two obtuse angles in a triangle, so thou, gazing on the point to which all times are present,[2] seest contingent things before they are in themselves,— while I was in Virgil's company upon the mountain that heals the souls, and descending into the dead world, grave words were spoken to me of my future life, though I feel myself set foursquare against the blows of chance; so that my desire would be met if I knew what fortune approaches me, for an arrow foreseen comes more gently.' I said this to that same light that had talked with me before, and as Beatrice bade my wish was declared.

Not with dark sayings, with which the foolish people were once ensnared before the Lamb of God who takes away sins was slain,[3] but in plain words and express terms, that fatherly love replied, hidden and revealed by his own smile: 'Contingency, which does not extend beyond the volume of your material world, is all depicted in the Eternal Vision, yet does not thence derive necessity, any more than does a ship that drops down stream from the eyes in which it is mirrored; from thence, as sweet harmony comes from an organ to the ear, comes to my sight the time that is in store for thee.[4] As Hippolytus was driven from Athens on account of his cruel and perfidious stepmother,[5] so must thou be driven from Florence. This is determined, nay is already contrived and will soon be accomplished, by him who meditates it in the place where Christ is bought and sold all day.[6] The blame, in the common cry, shall follow the injured side, as always, but the vengeance shall be testimony to the truth that dispenses it. Thou shalt leave everything loved most dearly, and this is the shaft which the bow of exile shoots first. Thou shalt prove how salt is the taste of another man's bread and how hard is the way up and down another man's stairs. And that which shall weigh heaviest on thy shoulders is the wicked and senseless company with which thou shalt fall into that valley, which shall become wholly ungrateful, quite mad and furious against thee; but before long they, not thou, shall have the brows red for this. Of their brutish folly their doings shall give proof, so that it shall be to thine honour to have made a party by thyself.

'Thy first refuge and inn thou shalt find in the courtesy of the great Lombard who bears on the ladder the sacred bird,[7] and he will hold thee in so gracious regard that, of doing and asking between you two, that shall be first which with others comes after. With him thou shalt see one who at his birth so took the impress of this mighty star that his deeds will be renowned.[8] The people have not yet taken note of him, because of his youth, for these wheels have circled about him only nine years; but before the Gascon deceives the noble Henry[9] sparks of his heroism shall appear in his disregard both of wealth and toil, and his munificence shall yet be known so that his enemies cannot keep silence about it. Look to him and to his benefits. Through him there shall be altered fortune for many, rich changing state with beggars. And thou shalt bear this written in thy mind about him and shalt not tell it'—and he told things which shall be incredible to those that witness them. Then he added: 'Son, these are the glosses on what was told thee, these are the snares that are hid behind a few revolving years; yet I would not have thee envious of thy fellow-citizens, for thy life shall far outlast the punishment of their perfidies.'

After the holy soul, falling silent, showed that he had finished putting the woof into the web of which I had set the warp for him, I began, as one in doubt that craves counsel of him who sees and rightly wills and loves: 'I see well, my father, how time spurs towards me to deal me such a blow as falls most heavily on him that is most heedless;

it is well, therefore, that I arm me with foresight, so that, if the dearest place is taken from me, I may not lose the others by my songs. Down through the world of endless bitterness, and on the mountain from whose fair summit the eyes of my Lady lifted me, and after, through the heavens from light to light, I have learned that which, if I tell again, will taste for many of bitter herbs; and if I am a timid friend to truth I fear to lose my life among those who will call these times ancient.'

The light within which was smiling the treasure I had found there first became ablaze like a golden mirror in the sun, then replied: 'Conscience dark with its own or another's shame will indeed feel thy words to be harsh; but none the less put away every falsehood and make plain all thy vision,—and then let them scratch where is the itch. For if thy voice is grievous at first taste, it will afterwards leave vital nourishment when it is digested. This cry of thine shall do as does the wind, which strikes most on the highest summits; and that is no small ground of honour. For that reason have been shown to thee, in these wheels, on the mountain, and in the woeful valley, only souls that are known to fame; because the mind of one who hears will not pause or fix its faith for an example that has its roots unknown or hidden or for other proof that is not manifest.'

CANTO XVIII

The fighting saints; the Sphere of Jupiter; just rulers; the Eagle of souls

ALREADY that blessed mirror was rejoicing by himself in his own thoughts and I was tasting mine, tempering the bitter with the sweet, when the Lady who was leading me to God said: 'Change thy thought; consider that I am in His presence who lifts the burden of every wrong.'

I turned at the loving voice of my comfort and what I saw then of love in the holy eyes I leave here untold, not only because I distrust my speech but because memory cannot return on itself so far unless One guide it. So much I can tell again of that moment, that, as I gazed at her, my heart was freed from every other desire so long as the Eternal Joy that shone direct on Beatrice satisfied me from the fair eyes with its second aspect.[1] Overcoming me with the light of a smile, she said to me: 'Turn and listen, for not only in my eyes is Paradise.'

As here sometimes emotion is seen in the face to be such that the whole soul is seized with it, so in the flaming of the holy effulgence to which I turned I recognized his wish to have some further

speech with me, and he began: 'In this fifth lodgement of the tree which lives from the top and is always in fruit and never sheds its leaves[2] are blessed spirits which below, before they came to heaven, were of so great fame that every muse would be enriched by them; look, therefore, at the horns of the cross, and each one I name will do there as does its swift fire in a cloud.'[3]

I saw a light drawn through the cross at the name of Joshua as soon as it was spoken, nor did I note the speech before the fact; and at the name of the great Maccabaeus[4] I saw another move wheeling, and joy was the whip to the top; so for Charlemagne and Roland[5] my intent gaze followed two of them as the eye follows its falcon in flight; next William and Renouard and the Duke Godfrey drew my sight through that cross, and Robert Guiscard too.[6] Then, having left me and mingled with the other lights, the soul that had talked with me showed me what was his skill among the singers of that heaven.

I turned on my right to see in Beatrice my duty signified by word or gesture, and I saw her eyes so clear, so joyful, that her aspect surpassed all it had been at other times, even the last. And as from feeling more delight in well-doing a man is conscious day by day of his advance in virtue, so I was conscious, when I saw that miracle more fair, that my circling along with the heavens had increased its arc; and such a change as passes in a moment over the face of a pale woman when she is freed from a burden of shame there was for my eyes when

I had turned, on account of the whiteness of the temperate sixth star, which had received me into itself.[7]

I saw in that torch of Jove the sparkling of the love that was there trace out our speech to my eyes; and as birds risen from a river-bank, as if rejoicing together over their pasture, make of themselves, now a round flock, now another shape, so within the lights holy creatures were singing as they flew and made themselves, in the figures they formed, now *D*, now *I*, now *L*. First, singing, they moved to their own notes; then, becoming one of these shapes, they paused for a little and were silent.

O divine Pegasean that givest glory and long life to genius, as it does through thee to cities and kingdoms,[8] illumine me with thyself that I may set forth their shapes as I deciphered them. Let thy power appear in these brief lines.

They showed themselves, then, in five times seven vowels and consonants, and I noted them severally, and what they seemed to me to mean. *DILIGITE IUSTITIAM*—these were the first verb and noun of the whole design; *QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM*,[9] the last. Then in the *M* of the fifth word they kept their order, so that Jupiter seemed there silver pricked out with gold; and I saw other lights descend on the very summit of the *M* and settle there, singing, I think, of the good that draws them to itself. Then, as when burning logs are struck rise innumerable sparks, from which the foolish are accustomed to make auguries, so more than a thousand lights appeared to rise again from there and to mount, some much, some little, as the Sun that kindles them appointed;

and when each had settled in its place I saw the head and neck of an eagle represented in that pricked-out fire. He that designs there has none to guide Him. He Himself guides, even as we recognize to be from Him that power which is form for the nests.[10] The rest of the blessed spirits, which seemed at first content to form a lily on the *M*, with a little movement followed out the design.

O sweet star, how many and how bright were the gems which made it plain to me that our justice is the effect of the heaven thou dost gem![11] I pray, therefore, the Mind in which thy motion and thy power begin that it look on the place whence comes the smoke that dims thy beam,[12] so that once again it may be wroth at the buying and selling in the temple whose walls were built with miracles and martyrdoms. O hosts of heaven whom I contemplate, pray for those that are on earth, all led astray by ill example. Once it was the custom to make war with swords, but now it is made with refusing, now here, now there, the bread which the merciful Father bars from none.[13] But thou that writest only to cancel, take thought that Peter and Paul, who died for the vineyard thou layest waste, are yet alive. Well mayst thou say: 'I have so set my heart on him who chose to live solitary and was dragged by dances to martyrdom[14] that I know neither the Fisherman nor Paul.

CANTO XIX

The speech of the Eagle; the question of the virtuous heathen; the mystery of Divine Justice; the wickedness of Christian kings

BEFORE me appeared with open wings the beautiful image made by the congregated souls, happy in their sweet fruition; each seemed a little ruby in which the sun's ray burned with such a flame that it was thrown back into my eyes. And that of which I have now to tell never tongue conveyed, nor ink wrote, nor ever was conceived by fancy. For I saw and I heard the beak talk and utter with its voice *I* and *mine* when its meaning was *we* and *ours*; and it began: 'For being just and merciful I am here exalted to that glory which desire cannot surpass, and on earth I left such a memory that the wicked people there commend it but do not continue its story.' Thus is felt a single glow from many brands, as from that image came forth a single sound of many loves.

And I then: 'O perpetual flowers of the eternal bliss who make all your odours seem to me but one, breathe forth and deliver me from the great fast that has long kept me hungry, finding no food for it on

earth. I know well that though the Divine Justice is mirrored in another realm of heaven yours apprehends it without a veil. You know with what intentness I am prepared to listen, you know what is that doubt which is so old a fast in me.'

As the falcon released from the hood moves its head and flaps its wings, showing its eagerness and preening its feathers, so I saw that sign, woven of praises of the Divine Grace, bear itself, with songs such as he knows who rejoices there above. Then it began: 'He that turned His compass about the bounds of the world[1] and within it devised so variously things hidden and manifest, could not make His Power to be so impressed on the whole universe that His Word should not remain in infinite excess; and, in proof of this, the first proud spirit, who was the highest of all creatures, fell unripe through not waiting for light, from which it is plain that every lesser nature is too scant a vessel for that good which has no limit and measures itself by itself.[2] Thus our vision, which must needs be one of the rays of the Mind of which all things are full, cannot by its nature be of such power that it should not perceive its origin to be far beyond all that appears to it.[3] Therefore the sight that is granted to your world penetrates within the Eternal Justice as the eye into the sea; for though from the shore it sees the bottom, in the open sea it does not, and yet the bottom is there but the depth conceals it.[4] There is no light but that which comes from the clear sky that is never clouded; else it is darkness, either the shadow of the flesh or

its poison.[5] Now is laid well open to thee the hiding-place that concealed from thee the living Justice of which thou hast so often made question. For thou saidst: "A man is born on the bank of the Indus, and none is there to speak, or read, or write of Christ, and all his desires and doings are good, so far as human reason sees, without sin in life or speech. He dies unbaptized and without faith. Where is this justice that condemns him? Where is his fault if he does not believe?" Now, who art thou[6] that wouldst sit upon the bench and judge a thousand miles away with sight short of a span? Assuredly, for him that would reason it out with me, if the Scriptures were not set over you there would be abundant room for question. O earthly creatures, gross minds! The Primal Will, which in itself is good, from itself, the Supreme Good, never was moved; whatever accords with it is in that measure just; no created good draws it to itself, but it, raying forth, creates that good.'[7]

As the stork circles over the nest when she has fed her young and as the one that is fed looks up to her, so did the blessed image and so I lifted up my brow and it moved the wings that were impelled by so many counsels. Wheeling, it sang, then spoke: 'As are my notes to thee who canst not follow them, such is the Eternal Judgement to you mortals.'

When these shining fires of the Holy Ghost had paused, still in the sign that made the Romans reverend to the world, it began again: 'To this kingdom none ever rose who did not believe in Christ, either before or after He was nailed to the

with the mountains that surround her! And, for earnest of this, all men should know that Nicosia and Famagosta lament and complain of their own beast, which keeps its place beside the rest.'[10]

CANTO XX

Just rulers in the eye of the Eagle; Trajan and Ripheus; the salvation of pagans; predestination

WHEN he that lightens all the world sinks from our hemisphere so far that day is spent on every side, the sky, which before was kindled by him alone, suddenly shows itself again with many lights in which one shines;[1] and this change in the sky came to my mind when the standard of the world and of its chiefs was silent in the blessed beak. For all those living lights, shining still more brightly, began songs that slip and fall from my memory. O sweet Love that mantlest thyself in a smile, how glowing didst thou show in those flutes that were filled only with the breath of holy thoughts!

After the bright and precious jewels with which I saw the sixth light gemmed had made silence in their angelic chimes, I seemed to hear the murmur of a stream that fell limpid from rock to rock, showing the abundance of its mountain source; and as the sound takes its form at the neck of the lute and the wind at the vent of the pipe it fills, so, keeping me waiting no longer, that murmur of the Eagle rose up through the neck as if it were

hollow. There it became a voice that came forth thence by the beak in the form of words such as my heart, where I wrote them down, awaited.

'That part in me which in mortal eagles sees and endures the sun thou must now watch intently,' it began to me 'for, of the fires of which I make my form, those with which the eye sparkles in my head are the highest in all their ranks. He that shines in the middle for pupil was the singer of the Holy Ghost, who carried the ark from house to house;[2] now he knows the merit of his song so far as it was the fruit of his own counsel,[3] by the reward that is proportioned to it. Of the five who make an arch for my eyebrow, he that is nearest to my beak consoled the poor widow for her son;[4] now he knows how dear it costs not to follow Christ, by experience of this sweet life and of its opposite. And he that follows on the same curve on the upward arc delayed his death by a true repentance;[5] now he knows that the eternal decree is not changed when fitting prayer below makes today's event tomorrow's. The next following, with good intention that had bad fruit, made himself Greek, with the laws and me, so as to give place to the Shepherd;[6] now he knows that the evil derived from his good deed does not harm him though the world is brought to ruin by it. And he thou seest on the downward arc was William, for whom that land mourns that weeps on account of the living Charles and Frederick;[7] now he knows how heaven is moved with love for the just king, as by the effulgence of his aspect he still makes plain.

Who in the erring world below would believe that Trojan Ripheus[8] was the fifth of the holy lights in this round? Now he knows much that the world cannot see of the Divine Grace, although his sight does not discern the bottom.'

Like the lark that soars in the air, first singing, then silent, content with the last sweetness that satiates it, such seemed to me that image, the imprint of the Eternal Pleasure by whose will all things come to have their being.[9] And although I was to my perplexity there as glass to the colour that coats it, my question did not bear to wait its time in silence, but by its weight and pressure forced from my lips: 'How can these things be?'; at which I saw a great revelry of flashing lights. And then, its eye kindling yet more, the blessed sign replied, not to keep me in suspense and amazement: 'I see that thou believest these things because I tell them, but seest not how they can be, so that, though they are believed, they are hidden; thou art like one that knows a thing well by name but cannot perceive the quiddity of it unless some one set it forth. *Regnum coelorum* suffereth violence[10] from fervent love and lively hope, which conquer the Divine Will, not as man masters man, but conquer it because it would be conquered, and, being conquered, conquers with its own goodness. The first living soul and the fifth of the eyebrow make thee marvel to see the region of the angels decked with them. They came forth from their bodies not, as thou thinkest, gentile,[11] but Christian, with firm faith, the one in the Feet that were to suffer, the other in these Feet having suffered. For

from Hell, where there is no returning to right will, the one came again to his bones; and this was the reward of a lively hope, the lively hope that gave power to the prayers made to God to raise him up so that it should be possible for his will to be moved. The glorious soul I tell of, having returned to the flesh for a short time, believed in Him that was able to help him, and, believing, was kindled to such a fire of true love that on his second death he was worthy to come to this festival. The other, through grace which wells from so deep a fountain that no creature ever thrust his eye to its primal spring, set all his love below on righteousness; therefore from grace to grace God opened his eyes to our coming redemption, so that he believed in it and from that time endured no longer the stench of paganism but rebuked the perverse peoples for it. Those three ladies whom thou sawest by the right wheel[12] stood for baptism to him more than a thousand years before baptizing. O predestination, how far removed is thy root from their gaze who see not the First Cause whole! And you mortals, keep yourselves restrained in judging, for we, who see God, do not yet know all the elect; and this very lack is sweet to us, because in this good our good is perfected, that that which God wills we will too.'

Thus by that divine image was given sweet medicine to clear the shortness of my sight. And as a good lutanist makes the trembling string accompany a good singer, by which the song gains

more sweetness, so, while it spoke, I remember to have seen the two blessed lights, just as winking eyes keep time together, move with the words their little flames.

CANTO XXI

The Sphere of Saturn; the contemplatives; the ladder; St Peter Damian; monastic degeneracy

ALREADY my eyes were fixed again on the face of my Lady, and with them my mind, which was withdrawn from every other thought; and she did not smile, but 'Were I to smile' she began to me 'thou wouldst become like Semele when she was turned to ashes;[1] for my beauty, which thou hast seen kindle more the higher we climb by the stairs of the eternal palace, is so shining that if it were not tempered thy mortal powers in its blaze would be as a branch split by a thunderbolt. We have risen to the seventh splendour, which beneath the breast of the burning Lion rays down now mingled with its power.[2] Set thy mind behind thine eyes and make of them mirrors to the shape which in this mirror will appear to thee.'

One that knew what was the pasture of my sight in that blessed aspect might recognize, when I directed my mind elsewhere, what joy it was to me to be obedient to my heavenly guide, balancing the one scale with the other.

Within the crystal which, circling about the world, bears the name of the world's famous chief under whom all wickedness lay dead,[3] I saw, of the colour

of gold that flashes in the sun, a ladder which rose to such a height that my sight could not follow it. I saw, too, descending by the steps, so many splendours that I thought every light that shows in heaven had been poured out there; and as by natural habit the daws rise together at daybreak to warm their cold feathers, then some fly off not to return, some turn back to where they set out, and some stay wheeling about, such movements appeared to me in that sparkling throng that drew together, as soon as it lighted on a certain step.

And the one that stopped nearest us became so bright that I said in my mind: 'I see well the love thou signallest to me.' But she on whom I wait to know how and when to speak and when to be silent keeps still, so that I do well, against my desire, to ask no question. She, therefore, who saw my silence in seeing Him who sees all said to me: 'Satisfy thy eager desire.' And I began: 'My merit does not make me worthy of thy answer, but for her sake who gives me leave to ask, blest living soul that remainest hid within thy happiness, let me know the cause that has brought thee so near me; and say why in this wheel the sweet symphony of Paradise is silent which through the others below sounds so devoutly.'

'Thy hearing is mortal even as thy sight,' he answered me 'therefore there is no singing here for the same reason that Beatrice has no smile. I have come down the steps of the sacred stairway so far only to give thee welcome with speech and with the light that mantles me; nor was it greater love that

made me swifter, for love as much and more burns up there, as the flaming shows thee, but the deep charity which makes us prompt in service of the Counsel that rules the world allots here as thou perceivest.'

'I see indeed, holy lamp,' I said 'how free love serves in this court for fulfilment of the Eternal Providence; but this I find it hard to understand, why thou alone among thy fellows wast predestined to this charge.'

And I had not reached the last word when the light made of its middle a centre and spun round like a rapid millstone. Then the love that was within it replied: 'A divine light is focused upon me, piercing through this in which I am embosomed, whose virtue, joined with my own vision, raises me so far above myself that I see the Supreme Essence from which it is drawn. From this comes the gladness with which I am aflame; for to my sight, in the measure of its clearness, I match the clearness of my flame.[4] But that soul in heaven that is most illumined, that seraph whose eye is most fixed on God, will not satisfy thy question; for what thou askest is so far removed in the abyss of the Eternal Ordinance that it is cut off from every created vision. And to the mortal world, when thou returnest, bear this report, so that it may no more presume to set its steps to such a goal. The mind, which shines here, on earth smokes; consider then how it could do down there what it cannot though heaven raise it to itself.'

His words so restrained me that I gave up the question and checked myself, only asking him humbly who he was.

'Between the two shores of Italy and not far distant from thy native place rise crags so high that the thunder sounds far below them; and they make a ridge that is called Catria, beneath which is consecrated a hermitage which once was wholly given to worship.' Thus he began again, addressing me the third time; then continued: 'There I became so constant in God's service that with food seasoned only with olive-juice I passed easily through heats and frosts, content in contemplative thoughts.[5] That cloister used to yield abundant harvest to these heavens, and now it is become barren so that it must soon be exposed. In that place I was Peter Damian, and I was Peter the Sinner in the House of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore. Little of mortal life remained to me when I was sought out and dragged to that hat which is passed on only from bad to worse. Cephas came, and the great vessel of the Holy Ghost came, lean and barefoot, taking their food at any inn.[6] Now the modern shepherds want one on this side and one on that to prop them up and one to lead them—so portly are they—and one behind to lift their train. They cover their palfreys with their cloaks, so that two beasts go under one skin. O Patience, that endurest so much!'

At his voice I saw more little flames descend from step to step, wheeling, and every turn made them more beautiful. They came about him and stopped and raised a cry of such volume that nothing here could be likened to it; nor did I understand it, its thunder so overcame me.

CANTO XXII

St Benedict; the degeneracy of the Benedictines; the ascent to the Starry Sphere; the sight of the earth

OVERWHELMED with amazement, I turned to my guide, like a child that runs back always to the place where it has most confidence; and she, like a mother who quickly comforts her pale and breathless boy with the voice that has often reassured him, said to me: 'Knowest thou not thou art in heaven? Knowest thou not that heaven is all holy and that whatever is done here comes of righteous zeal? How the song, and I by smiling, would have confounded thee thou canst now conceive since this cry has so much moved thee; and in it, if thou hadst understood their prayers, the vengeance would have been known to thee already which thou shalt see before thy death. The sword here above does not strike in haste or tardily, except as it seems to him that awaits it with desire or with fear. But turn now to the others, for thou shalt see many illustrious spirits if thou direct thy sight as I say.'

I turned my eyes as she bade and I saw a hundred little spheres which beautified each other with their mutual beams. I stood as one who restrains in himself the prick of desire and for fear of presumption dare not ask a question; and the largest

and most lustrous of these pearls came forward to satisfy my desire regarding itself. Then within it I heard: 'If thou sawest as I do the charity that burns among us thou wouldst have uttered thy thoughts; but lest thou be delayed in thy lofty aim by waiting I shall answer the thought itself about which thou art so guarded.

'That mountain on whose slope Cassino lies was once frequented on its summit by the deluded and perverse people, and it was I who first carried up there His name who brought to earth the truth that so exalts us; and such grace shone down on me that I drew away the neighbouring towns from the impious worship that led the world astray.[1] These other fires were all men of contemplation, kindled by that heat which brings holy flowers and fruits to birth. Here is Macarius; here is Romualdus;[2] here are my brothers who stayed their feet within the cloisters and kept steadfast hearts.'

And I said to him: 'The affection thou showest in talking with me and the marks of kindness which I see and note in all your fires have expanded my confidence as the sun does the rose when it opens to its fullest bloom; therefore I pray thee—and tell me, father, if I may gain so great a favour—that I may see thee with thy face unveiled.'

And he: 'Brother, thy high desire shall be fulfilled above in the last sphere, where is fulfilment of all the others, and my own.[3] There all we long for is perfect, ripe and whole. In it alone each part is

where it always was, for it is not in space and does not turn on poles; and our ladder goes up to it and therefore steals thus from thy sight. The patriarch Jacob saw the top of it reach that height, when it appeared to him so laden with angels. But now none lifts his foot from the earth to climb it, and my Rule is left to waste the paper; the walls that were once an abbey have become dens and the cowls are sacks full of rotten meal. But heavy usury is not exacted so contrary to God's pleasure as is that fruit which so turns the hearts of the monks to folly; for all that is in the Church's keeping is for them that ask in God's name, not for kinsfolk or others more vile.[4] So soft is mortal flesh that a good beginning below does not last from the springing of the oak to the bearing of the acorn. Peter began his fellowship without gold or silver,[5] and I mine with prayer and fasting, and Francis his with humility; and if thou look at the starting-point of each, then look again whither it has strayed, thou shalt see it become dark from white. Nevertheless, Jordan driven back and the sea that fled at God's will[6] were sights more marvellous than succour here.'

He spoke thus to me, and drew back to his company, and the company pressed close together; then, like a whirlwind, all were swept above. The sweet Lady, with only a sign, impelled me after them up that stairway, so did her power overcome my nature; and never here below, where we mount and descend by natural law, was motion so swift as might match my flight. So may I sometime

return, reader, to that devout triumph for which I often bewail my sins and beat my breast, thou hadst not drawn out and thrust in thy finger in the fire[7] before I saw the sign that follows the Bull and was within it.[8]

O glorious stars, O light pregnant with mighty power from which I acknowledge all my genius, whatever it be, with you was born and with you hidden he that is the father of each mortal life when I first tasted the Tuscan air; and after, when grace was granted me to enter into the high wheel that bears you round, your region was assigned to me. To you my soul now sighs devoutly that it may gain strength for the hard task that draws it to itself.

'Thou art so near to the final blessedness' Beatrice began 'that thou must have thine eyes clear and keen; and therefore, before thou go farther into it, look down and see how much of the universe I have already put beneath thy feet, so that with all fulness of joy thy heart may present itself to the triumphal host that comes rejoicing through this rounded ether.'

With my sight I returned through every one of the seven spheres, and I saw this globe such that I smiled at its paltry semblance; and that judgement which holds it for least I approve as best, and he whose thought is on other things may rightly be called just. I saw Latona's daughter glowing, without that shadow for which I once believed her to be rare and dense;[9] thy son's aspect, Hyperion, I endured there, and I saw how Maia and Dione move in their circles near him;[10] from thence

appeared to me the tempering of Jove between his father and his son,[11] and from thence the changes were clear to me which they make in their positions; and all seven showed me what is their magnitude and what their speed and at what distances their stations. The little threshing-floor that makes us so fierce all appeared to me from hills to river-mouths, while I was wheeling with the eternal Twins. Then to the fair eyes I turned my eyes again.

CANTO XXIII

The Church Triumphant; Christ, Mary and Gabriel; their ascent

As the bird among the loved branches, having sat on the nest of her sweet brood through the night that hides things from us, anticipates the time on the open spray that she may see their longed-for looks and find the food to nourish them for which her heavy toils are welcome to her, and with ardent longing awaits the sun, watching with fixed gaze for the dawn to break; so my Lady stood erect and intent, turned towards the part beneath which the sun shows less haste.[1] I, therefore, seeing her in suspense and longing, became as one that is moved with desire and satisfied with hope. But the time was short between the one moment and the next, my expectancy, I mean, and my seeing the sky turn more and more resplendent; and Beatrice said: 'Lo the hosts of Christ's triumph and all the fruit garnered from the wheeling of these spheres!'[2] It seemed to me that her face was all aflame, and her eyes were so full of gladness that I must pass on without words for it. As in clear nights of full moon Trivia[3] smiles among the eternal nymphs that deck the sky through all its depths, I saw,

above thousands of lamps, a Sun which kindled each one of them as ours does the sights we see above, and through the living light the shining substance[4] showed so bright in my eyes that they could not bear it.

O Beatrice, sweet guide and dear! She said to me: 'That which overcomes thee is power from which there is no defence. Here is the wisdom and the might[5] that opened the ways between heaven and earth and for which of old there was such long desire.'

As fire breaks from a cloud, swelling till it has not room there, and against its nature falls to the earth,[6] so my mind, grown greater at that feast, was transported from itself and of what it became has no remembrance.

'Open thine eyes and look at me as I am; thou hast seen such things that thou hast gained strength to bear my smile.' I was like one that wakes from a forgotten dream and strives in vain to bring it again to mind when I heard this invitation, worthy of such gratitude that it can never be blotted from the book that records the past. Though all those tongues which Polyhymnia and her sisters[7] have nourished with their sweetest milk should sound now to aid me, it would not come to a thousandth part of the truth, in singing the holy smile and how it lit up the holy aspect; and so, picturing Paradise, the sacred poem must make a leap like one that finds his path cut off. But he that considers the weighty theme and the mortal shoulder that is burdened with it will not blame it if it tremble

beneath the load. It is no passage for a little bark, this which the daring prow goes cleaving, nor for a pilot that would spare himself.

'Why does my face so enamour thee that thou dost not turn to the fair garden that flowers under the rays of Christ? There is the rose[8] in which the divine Word was made flesh. There are the lilies for whose fragrance the good way was taken.'[9] Beatrice said this; and I, who was all eager for her counsels, gave myself again to the struggle of my feeble eyelids.

As in the sun's rays streaming clear through a broken cloud my eyes, sheltered by shade, once saw a field of flowers, so I saw many hosts of splendours flashed upon from above by burning rays, without seeing the source of the brightness. O gracious Power who thus settest Thy stamp on them, Thou didst ascend so as to grant scope to the eyes there that had not strength for Thee. The name of the fair flower which I always invoke morning and evening absorbed all my mind as I gazed on the greatest of the fires;[10] and when the quality and magnitude of the living star who surpasses there above as she surpassed here below were pictured in both my eyes, there descended through the sky a torch which, circling, took the likeness of a crown that encircled her and wheeled about her.[11] Whatever melody sounds sweetest here below and most draws the soul to itself would seem thunder bursting from a cloud compared with the sound of that lyre that crowned the fair sapphire by which the sky is so brightly ensapphired.

'I am angelic love who encircle the supreme joy which breathes from the womb that was the inn

of our desire, and I shall circle thee, Lady of Heaven, until thou follow thy Son and make more divine by entering it the highest sphere.' So that circling melody reached its close, and all the other lights made Mary's name resound.

The royal mantle of all the world's revolving spheres, which most burns and is most quickened in the breath of God and in His working,[12] had its inner bound so distant that it was still out of sight where I was, so that my eyes were not able to follow the crowned flame that rose after her seed. And like an infant that stretches out its arms to its mother after it has taken the milk, its impulse kindling into outward flame, each of these white radiances reached upward with its flame, so that the deep affection they had for Mary was made plain to me; then they remained there in my sight, singing *Regina coeli*[13] so sweetly that the delight has never left me. O how great is the abundance that is stored in these so rich garners that were good sowers here below![14] Here they live and rejoice in the treasure which they gained with tears in the exile of Babylon, where they spurned its gold. Here triumphs in his victory, under the exalted Son of God and of Mary and with both the old and the new assembly, he that holds the keys of such glory.[15]

CANTO XXIV

St Peter; his examination of Dante on faith

'O FELLOWSHIP elect to the great supper of the blessed Lamb, who feeds you so that your desire is ever satisfied,[1] since by God's grace this man has foretaste of that which falls from your table, before death appoints his time, give heed to his measureless craving and bedew him with some drops; you drink always from the fountain whence comes that on which his mind is set.' Beatrice said this; and those happy spirits formed themselves in circles on fixed poles, flaming brightly like comets. And as wheels in the structure of a clock revolve so that, to one watching them, the first seems at rest and the last to fly, so those choirs, dancing severally fast and slow, made me gauge their wealth.

From the one I noted as the richest I saw come forth a fire so joyful that it left none there of greater brightness, and it wheeled three times round Beatrice with so divine a song that my fancy does not repeat it to me, therefore my pen leaps and I do not write of it; for our imagination, much more our speech, has colours too bright for such folds.[2]

'O my holy sister who prayest to us thus devoutly, by thy glowing affection thou dost loose me from that fair circle.' When it was still the blessed fire breathed forth these words to my Lady as I have told them.

And she: 'O eternal light of the great soul with whom our Lord left the keys which He brought down of this wondrous joy, test this man on points light and grave as thou seest good regarding the faith by which thou walkedst on the sea.[3] Whether he loves rightly and rightly hopes and believes is not hid from thee, since thou hast seen it there where all things are seen depicted; but since this kingdom has made its citizens by the true faith, it rightly falls to him to speak of it, that he may glorify it.'

Just as the bachelor arms himself and does not speak till the master submits the question—for argument, not for settlement[4]—, so I armed myself with all my reasons while she was speaking, to be ready for such a questioner and for such a profession.

'Speak, good Christian, declare thyself. What is faith?' At which I lifted up my brow to that light from which this breathed; then I turned to Beatrice, who quickly signed to me with a glance that I should pour forth the waters of my inward spring.

'May the grace which grants it to me to make my confession to the Chief Centurion' I began 'give me right utterance for my thoughts.' And I went on: 'As the truthful pen of thy dear brother wrote of it who with thee, father, put Rome on the good path, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen;[5] and this I take to be its quiddity.'

Then I heard: 'Thou thinkest rightly if thou understandest well why he placed it among the substances and after among the evidences.'

And I then: 'The deep things which so richly manifest themselves to me here are so hidden from men's eyes below that there their existence lies in belief alone, on which is based the lofty hope; and therefore it takes the character of substance.[6] And from this belief we must reason, without seeing more; therefore it holds the character of evidence.'

Then I heard: 'If all that is acquired below for doctrine were thus understood, there would be no room left for sophist's wit.'

This breathed from that kindled love; and it continued: 'Now the alloy and the weight of this money have been well examined; but tell me if thou hast it in thy purse.'

I therefore: 'I have indeed, so bright and round that of its mintage I am in no doubt.'

Then there came from the depth of the light that was shining there: 'This precious jewel on which every virtue rests, whence did it come to thee?'

And I: 'The plenteous rain of the Holy Spirit that is poured out on the old and new parchments[7] is a syllogism which has established it for me with such acuteness that every other demonstration, compared with that, seems to me futile.'

I heard then: 'The old premiss and the new which are so conclusive for thee, why dost thou hold them for divine utterance?'

And I: 'The proof which declares the truth to me is the works that followed, for which nature never heated iron nor smote anvil.'[8]

'Tell me,' came the reply 'who assures thee that these works ever were? The very thing that must be proved, nothing else, attests them to thee.'

'If the world was converted to Christianity without miracles,' I said 'that one is such that the rest are not a hundredth part of it;[9] for thou didst enter the field poor and fasting to sow the good plant that was once a vine and is now become a thorn.'

This ended, the high and holy court resounded through its circles with a *Te Deum laudamus* in the strains that are sung there above.

And that Baron,[10] who had brought me thus from branch to branch in his examination so that we approached the farthest boughs, began again: 'The grace that wooes thy mind has till now opened thy lips aright, so that I approve what has come from them; but now thou must declare what thou believest and whence it was offered to thy belief.'

'O holy father, spirit who seest that which thou believedst so that thou didst outstrip younger feet to the sepulchre,'[11] I began 'thou wouldst have me make plain here the form[12] of my willing faith and askest too the source of it. And I reply: I believe in one God, sole and eternal, who, unmoved, moves all heaven with love and desire; and for this belief I have not only proofs physical and metaphysical, but it is given me also in the truth that rains down hence through Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms,[13] through the Gospel and through you who wrote after the burning Spirit made you holy.[14] And I believe in three eternal Persons; and these I believe to be one Essence, so one and so three-fold that it admits agreement both with *are* and *is*. With the profound divine state of being of which I speak the Gospel teaching many times stamps my mind. This is the beginning, this is

the spark which then broadens to a living flame and shines within me like a star in heaven.'

As the master who listens to that which pleases him then embraces his servant, rejoicing in his news, as soon as he is silent; so, singing benedictions on me, the apostolic light at whose bidding I had spoken encircled me three times when I was silent, I so pleased him with my words.

CANTO XXV

St James; his examination of Dante on hope; St John

If it ever come to pass that the sacred poem to which both heaven and earth have set their hand so that it has made me lean for many years should overcome the cruelty that bars me from the fair sheepfold where I slept as a lamb, an enemy to the wolves that make war on it, with another voice now and other fleece I shall return a poet and at the font of my baptism take the laurel crown; for there I entered into the faith that makes souls known to God,[1] and after, because of it, Peter thus encircled my brow.

On that a light moved towards us from that circle from which had come the first-fruit that Christ left of His vicars,[2] and my Lady, full of gladness, said to me: 'See, see, that is the Baron for whom below they visit Galicia.'[3]

Just as, when the dove alights beside its mate, the one displays its fondness for the other, circling it and cooing, so I saw the one great and glorious prince received by the other, both giving praise for the feast they share above. But, when the joyful greeting was finished, they both stopped silent *coram me*,[4] so aflame that they overcame my sight.

Smiling, Beatrice said then: 'Illustrious living soul who didst write of the bounty of our royal court,[5] make hope resound in this height; thou canst, who wast the type of it all those times when Jesus showed most favour to the three.'[6]

'Lift up thy head and take confidence, for all that comes up here from the mortal world must be ripened in our beams.' This assurance came to me from the second fire; therefore I lifted up my eyes to the hills whose greatness weighed them down before. 'Since our Emperor, of His grace, wills that thou shouldst come before thy death face to face with His nobles in the inner chamber, so that, having seen the truth of this court, thou mayst with that strengthen in thyself and others the hope that begets true love below, say what it is and how it blossoms in thy mind, and say whence it came to thee.' Thus the second light continued.

And that compassionate one who directed the feathers of my wings to so high a flight anticipated my reply: 'The Church Militant has not a child more full of hope, as is written in the Sun that irradiates all our host; therefore is it granted him to come from Egypt to Jerusalem that he may see it before his warfare is accomplished. The other two points about which thou didst ask—not for enlightenment, but for him to report how dear this virtue is to thee—I leave to himself; for they will not be hard for him, nor occasion for boasting. So let him answer them, and for this God's grace be his help!'

Like a pupil who answers his master, ready and eager in his subject that he may show his parts,

'Hope' I said 'is a sure expectation of future glory, and it springs from divine grace and precedent merit. This light comes to me from many stars, but he first distilled it in my heart who was the sovereign singer of the Sovereign Lord.[7] In his divine song he says: "Let them hope in thee that know thy name"; and who does not know it that holds my faith? Besides his showers, thou didst shower on me in thy epistle, so that I am full and in turn rain your rain on others.'

While I spoke, within the living heart of that fire quivered a flash, sudden and repeated like lightning; then it breathed forth: 'The love with which I still burn for the virtue that followed me even to the palm and the departure from the field bids me breathe again to thee who delightest in it; and I would fain hear thee tell what is hope's promise to thee.'

And I: 'The new and the ancient Scriptures set forth the goal for the souls that God has made His friends, and this directs me to it. Isaiah says that each in his own land shall be clothed with double vesture,[8] and their own land is this sweet life; and thy brother, where he tells of the white robes,[9] declares this revelation to us far more expressly.'

And first, immediately I had finished speaking, *Sperent in te*[10] was heard above us, to which all the choirs responded; then one light among them shone out so that if the Crab held such a gem winter would have a month of unbroken day.[11] And as a happy maiden rises and comes forward and enters the dance, only to do honour to the bride, not for

any lightness, so I saw the splendour that had brightened approach the two who were wheeling to the song as befitted their burning love. He joined there in the singing and the dance, and my Lady held her looks on them, just like a bride silent and motionless.

'This is he that lay on the breast of our Pelican,[12] he that was chosen from the cross for the great charge.'[13] My Lady said this; but no more after than before her speech was her gaze moved from its intentness.

As one that strains his eyes, trying to see the sun in partial eclipse, and by seeing becomes sightless, such I became before that last fire, while it spoke: 'Why dost thou dazzle thyself to see that which has no place here?[14] My body is earth in the earth, and it will be there with the rest till our number tallies with the eternal purpose. With the two robes in the blessed cloister are only the two lights that have ascended,[15] and this report thou shalt take back to your world.'

At these words the flaming circle fell silent, together with the sweet mingled sound that was made by the three-fold breath, just as, to avoid fatigue or danger, oars till then struck through the water stop all at once at the sound of a whistle.

Ah, how troubled in mind I was when I turned to see Beatrice, not to be able to see her, though I was by her side and in the happy world!

CANTO XXVI

St John's examination of Dante on love; Adam; Dante's questions

WHILE I was in fear for my lost sight there came forth from the resplendent flame that had quenched it a breathing which held me intent, and it said: 'Till thou recover the sight thou hast consumed in me thou shalt do well to make up for it with speech. Begin then, and say on what aim thy soul is set. And be assured that thy sight is but confounded, not destroyed; for the Lady who guides thee through this divine region has in her look the same virtue as had the hand of Ananias.'[1]

And I said: 'May healing come soon or late as she will to eyes that were the doors when she entered with the fire with which I always burn. The good that satisfies this court is alpha and omega of all the scripture that love reads to me in tones loud or low.'

The same voice that had delivered me from my fear at the sudden dazzling made me eager to speak again, when it said: 'Assuredly thou must sift with a finer sieve, thou must tell who directed thy bow on that target.'

And I: 'By philosophic arguments and by authority that descends from here,[2] such love must

needs imprint itself on me; for the good, by virtue of its goodness, kindles love as soon as it is known, and so much the more the more of good it contains in itself. To that Essence, then, in which is such pre-eminence that every good found outside of it is nothing but a light from its radiance,[3] must be moved with love, more than to aught else, the mind of everyone who discerns the truth on which this reasoning rests. This truth he sets forth to my understanding who established for me the primal love of all the eternal beings;[4] the voice of the truthful Author sets it forth where, speaking of Himself, He says to Moses: "I will make thee see all goodness";[5] thou too settest it forth to me in the beginning of thy sublime announcement, which, more than any other heralding, proclaims below the mystery of this place above.'[6]

And I heard: 'On the ground of human reason and of the authorities in harmony with it, the highest of all thy loves looks to God; but say further if thou feelest other cords draw thee to Him, so that thou mayst name all the teeth by which this love bites thee.'

The holy purpose of Christ's Eagle[7] was not hidden; it was, indeed, plain to me where he would direct my profession. Therefore I began again: 'All those things whose bite can make the heart turn to God have wrought together in my charity; for the world's existence and my own, the death He bore that I might live, and that which every believer hopes for as I do, with the living assurance of which I spoke, have drawn me from the sea of perverse love and have brought me to the shore of the love that is just. The leaves with which all the garden of the eternal Gardener is embowered I love in the measure of the good He has bestowed on them.'

As soon as I was silent, a strain of sweetest song resounded through the heaven, and my Lady sang with the rest 'Holy, holy, holy!' And as sleep is broken by a piercing light when the visual spirit runs to meet the brightness that passes through film after film,[8] and the awakened man shrinks from what he sees, so unaware is his sudden waking till judgement comes to his help,—thus Beatrice chased every mote from my eyes with the radiance of her own which shone more than a thousand miles, so that I saw then better than before. And I asked in amazement about a fourth light which I saw beside us.

And my Lady answered: 'Within these rays looks with love on his Maker the first soul the First Power ever created.'

As the branch that bends its top in a gust of wind and then springs up, raised by its own force, so did I while she was speaking,—amazed, then restored to confidence by the desire to speak with which I burned; and I began: 'O fruit that alone wast brought forth ripe, O ancient father of whom every bride is daughter and daughter-in-law, as humbly as I may I beseech thee to speak with me. Thou seest my wish, and to hear thee sooner I do not tell it.'

Sometimes an animal that is covered up stirs so that its impulse is made to appear by the wrappings that follow its movement; and in like manner the primal soul showed me through its covering how gladly it came to do me pleasure. Then it breathed forth: 'Without thy telling of it I discern thy wish better than thou whatever is most certain

to thee; for I see it in the truthful mirror which makes of itself a reflection of all else and of which nothing makes of itself the reflection.[9] Thou wouldst hear how long it is since God put me in the lofty garden where this Lady prepared thee for so long a stair,—and how long it was a delight to my eyes,—and the real cause of the great wrath,—and the language that I used and shaped. Know then, my son, that not the tasting of the tree in itself was the cause of so long exile, but solely the trespass beyond the mark.[10] In the place from which thy Lady sent Virgil I longed for this assembly during four thousand, three hundred and two revolutions of the sun, and I saw it return to all the lights on its track nine hundred and thirty times while I lived on earth.[11] The tongue I spoke was all extinct before Nimrod's race gave their mind to the unaccomplishable task;[12] for no product whatever of reason—since human choice is renewed with the course of heaven—can last forever. It is a work of nature that man should speak, but whether in this way or that nature then leaves you to follow your own pleasure. Before I descended to the anguish of Hell the Supreme Good from whom comes the joy that swathes me was named *I* on earth, and later He was called *El*;[13] and that is fitting, for the usage of mortals is like a leaf on a branch, which goes and another comes. On the mountain that rises highest from the sea I lived; pure, then guilty, from the first hour to that following the sixth, when the sun changes quadrant.'[14]

CANTO XXVII

St Peter's denunciation of the Church; the ascent to the Crystalline Sphere; Beatrice on human degeneracy

'GLORY be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!' all Paradise began, so that the sweet song held me rapt; what I saw seemed to me a smile of the universe, so that my rapture entered both by hearing and by sight. O joy! O gladness unspeakable! O life fulfilled with love and peace! O wealth secure with no craving!

Before my eyes the four torches stood flaming; and the one that had come first began to grow brighter, and its aspect became as would Jupiter's if it and Mars were birds and exchanged plumage. The Providence which here assigns time and duty had imposed silence on the blessed choir on every side, when I heard: 'If I change colour do not marvel, for while I speak thou shalt see the colour change in all of these. He that usurps on earth my place, my place, my place, which in the sight of the Son of God is empty, has made of my tomb a sewer of blood and filth, so that the apostate who fell from here above takes comfort there below.'[1]

With the colour that paints the morning and evening clouds that face the sun I saw then the whole heaven suffused. And as a chaste woman who is sure of herself, and at another's fault, only hearing of it, is put to shame, so Beatrice changed semblance, and such eclipse, I believe, there was in heaven when the Omnipotent suffered.[2]

Then his words continued, in a voice so altered from itself that his looks were not more changed: 'The Bride of Christ was not nurtured with my blood and that of Linus and of Cletus to be used for gain of gold; but for gain of this happy life Sixtus and Pius and Calixtus and Urban shed their blood after many tears.[3] It was not our meaning that on the right hand of our successors should sit one part of Christ's people and the other on the left; nor that the keys which were committed to me should become the device on a standard for warfare on the baptized; nor that I should be the figure on a seal for sold and lying favours, for which I often redden and flash with fire.[4] Ravening wolves in shepherds' clothing are seen from here above through all the pastures. O God of our defence, why sleepst Thou still? Cahorsines and Gascons prepare to drink our blood.[5] O fair beginning, to what base end art thou to fall? But the high Providence which by Scipio saved for Rome the glory of the world[6] will, as I conceive, bring speedy succour. And thou, my son, who, for thy mortal burden, shalt return again below, open thy mouth and do not hide what I hide not.'

Even as our air, when the horn of the heavenly Goat is touched by the sun,[7] flakes down frozen vapours, so I saw the ether thus adorned, flaking upwards triumphal vapours which had made their stay with us there. My sight kept following their forms and followed them till the great space between took from it the power of reaching farther.

My Lady, therefore, who saw me freed from gazing up, said to me: 'Cast thy sight down and look how far thou hast revolved.'

From the time when I had looked before[8] I saw that I had moved through the whole arc from the middle to the end of the first clime, so that I saw on the one hand, beyond Cadiz, the mad track of Ulysses, and on the other nearly to the shore where Europa made herself a sweet burden; and more of the space of this little threshing-floor would have been disclosed to me but that the sun was moving on beneath my feet and was a sign and more away.[9]

The enamoured mind that wooes my Lady continually burned more than ever to bring back my eyes to her; and if nature or art have made baits to take the eyes so as to possess the mind, in human flesh or in its portraiture, all these together would seem nothing beside the divine delight that shone on me when I turned to her smiling face. And the virtue that her look granted me drew me forth from the fair nest of Leda[10] and thrust me into the swiftest of the heavens.[11]

Its parts, the nearest and the highest, are so uniform that I cannot tell which Beatrice chose for my place. But she, who saw my desire, began, smiling with such gladness that in her face seemed to be God's own joy: 'The nature of the universe,

which holds the centre still and moves all else round it, begins here as from its starting-point, and this heaven has no other *where* but the Divine Mind, in which is kindled the love that turns it and the virtue which it rains down. Light and love enclose it in a circle, as it does the others, and of that girding He that girds it is the sole Intelligence.[12] Its motion is not determined by another's, but from it the rest have their measures, even as ten from the half and the fifth;[13] and how time should have its roots in that vessel and in the others its leaves, may now be plain to thee.[14]

'O covetousness, who so plungest mortals in thy depths that none has power to lift his eyes from thy waves! The will blossoms well in men, but the continual rain turns the sound plums to withered. Faith and innocence are found only in little children; then, before the cheeks are covered, both are fled. One, still lisping, keeps the fasts, who after, when his tongue is free, devours any food through any month; another, lisping, loves and heeds his mother, who after, when his speech is perfect, longs to see her buried. So the white skin turns black at the first sight of the fair daughter of him that brings morning and leaves evening.[15] That thou marvel not at this, consider that there is no one to govern on the earth, so that the human family goes astray. But before all January leaves the winter, because of the hundredth part that is neglected below,[16] these lofty circles shall shine

forth so that the event so long looked-for shall turn the poops where are the prows; and then the fleet shall run on the straight course and good fruit shall follow the flower.'

CANTO XXVIII

The Angelic circles

WHEN she that imparadises my mind had declared the truth as against the present life of wretched mortals, then, as one that is lighted from behind sees the flame of a torch in the mirror before he has it in his sight or thought, and turns round to see if the glass tells him the truth, and sees that the one agrees with the other as a song with its measure, thus my memory records that I did, gazing into the fair eyes of which love made the noose to take me. And when I turned again and mine were met by what appears in that revolving sphere to one that looks intently on its circling, I saw a point which radiated a light so keen that the eye on which it burns must close for its piercing power; and the star that from here seems the least would seem a moon if put beside it like star with star in conjunction. As near, perhaps, as a halo appears to girdle the light that paints it when the vapour that carries it is most dense, at such a distance about the point a circle of fire was wheeling so fast it would have outstripped the motion that most swiftly girds the world;[1] and this was encircled by another, and that by the third, then the third by the fourth, the fourth by the fifth, and then the fifth by the sixth.

Beyond followed the seventh, spread now so wide that Juno's messenger,[2] completed, would be too small to contain it; and so the eighth and the ninth. And each moved more slowly as it was farther in order from the first; and that one had the clearest flame which was least distant from the pure spark, because, I believe, most partaking of its truth.[3]

My Lady, who saw me eager and perplexed, said: 'From that point hang the heavens and all nature. See that circle that is closest to it, and know that its motion is thus swift from the burning love by which it is impelled.'[4]

And I answered her: 'If the universe were disposed in the order I see in these wheels I should be satisfied with what thou hast set before me; but in the world of sense we can see that the orbits are more divine the farther they are from the centre. Therefore if my desire is to gain its end in this wondrous temple of the angels which has only love and light for bounds, then I still have to hear why the pattern and the copy do not follow the same plan; for by myself I meditate on this in vain.'

'If thy fingers are unfit for such a knot it is no wonder, so hard has it become from not being tried.' My Lady said this, then continued: 'Take what I shall tell thee if thou wouldst be satisfied, and whet thy wits on it. The material spheres are large or small according as more or less virtue is diffused through all their parts. Greater excellence must make greater blessedness; greater blessedness takes a greater body when the parts are of equal per-

fection. This sphere, therefore, which sweeps along with it all the rest of the universe, answers to the circle that loves most and knows most;[6] so that if thou apply thy measure to the virtue, not the appearance, of the spirits that appear to thee as circles, thou wilt see in each heaven a marvellous correspondence with its Intelligence, of greater with more and of smaller with less.'

As the vault of the air is left serene and shining when Boreas blows from his milder cheek[7] and the obscuring fog is dissolved and driven away so that heaven smiles on us with all the beauties of its pageantry, so it was with me when my Lady granted me her clear answer, and, like a star in heaven, the truth was plain. And when she paused in her speech, as iron sparkles when it boils so these circles sparkled; every spark kept to its own fire, and they were so many that their number ran to more thousands than the doubling of the chess-board.[8] I heard from choir to choir *Hosanna* sung to the fixed point, which holds and shall ever hold them in the place where they have ever been.

And she, who saw the uncertain thoughts in my mind, said: 'The first circles have shown thee Seraphim and Cherubim. They follow their bonds[9] thus swiftly to gain all they may of likeness to the point, and this they may in so far as they are exalted in vision.[10] These next loving spirits that circle round them are called Thrones of the divine aspect,[11] and with them the first triad is completed. And thou must know that all have delight in the measure of the depth to which their sight penetrates the truth in which every intellect finds rest; from

which it may be seen that the state of blessedness rests on the act of vision, not on that of love, which follows after, and the measure of their vision is merit, which grace begets and right will. Such is the process from step to step. The second triad that flowers thus in this eternal spring which no nightly Ram despoils[12] sings continual hosannas, the threefold strain resounding in the three ranks of bliss that form the triad. In this hierarchy are the next divine orders,—first Dominions, then Virtues, and the third are Powers. Then, last but one of the festal throngs, wheel Principalities and Archangels, and the last is all of Angels making sport. These orders all gaze above and so prevail below that all are drawn and all draw to God. And Dionysius[13] set himself with such zeal to contemplate these orders that he named and distributed them as I do; but later Gregory[14] differed from him, so that as soon as he opened his eyes in this heaven he smiled at himself. And if a mortal on earth set forth truth so secret thou needst not marvel, for he that saw it here above revealed it to him, with much more of the truth of these circles.'

CANTO XXIX

The creation and functions of the angels; the foolishness of preachers

WHEN the two children of Latona, covered by the Ram and by the Scales, both at once make a belt of the horizon, as long as from the moment when the zenith holds them balanced till the one and the other, changing hemispheres, are unbalanced from that girdle,[1] for so long, her face illumined with a smile, Beatrice kept silence, looking fixedly at the point that had overcome me.

Then she began: 'I tell, not ask, what thou wouldst hear; for I have seen it there where every *ubi* and every *quando* is centred.'[2] Not to gain any good for Himself, which cannot be, but that His splendour, shining back, might say *Subsisto*,[3]—in His eternity, beyond time, beyond every other bound, as it pleased Him, the Eternal Love revealed Himself in new loves.[4] Nor, before, did He lie as it were inert; for until God's moving upon these waters there was no 'before' or 'after'.[5] Form and matter, united and separate, came into being that had no defect, like three arrows from a three-stringed bow.[6] And as a ray shines into glass or amber or crystal so that from its coming to its completeness there is no interval, so the threefold creation flashed into being from its Lord all at once without distinction in its beginning. With it, order was

created and ordained for the spirits, and these were the summit of the universe in whom was produced pure act; pure potency had the lowest place; between, potency and act were held together with such a bond as never is unbound.[7] Jerome wrote for you of the angels being created a long course of ages before the rest of the world was made; but this truth I tell is written in many pages by the scribes of the Holy Ghost, as thou shalt find if thou look carefully;[8] and reason too sees it in some measure, for it would not allow that the movers of the heavens should be so long without their perfection.[9] Thou knowest now where and when these loving spirits were created, as well as how, so that three flames of thy desire are already spent.

'Then, sooner than one might count twenty, a part of the angels convulsed the lowest of your elements;[10] the rest remained and gave themselves with such delight to this art which thou beholdest that they never leave their circling. The beginning of the fall was the accursed pride of him thou sawest, crushed under all the weights of the world. These thou seest here were humble and acknowledged the Goodness that had made them fit for so great intelligence; thus their vision was exalted by enlightening grace and their own merit, so that they have full and steadfast will. And thou must not doubt, but be assured, that there is merit in receiving grace, in the measure that the heart is open to it. Now thou mayst freely contemplate this consistory without more help, if thou hast taken in my words.

'But since it is taught in your schools on earth that it belongs to the nature of the angels to understand and to remember and to will, I shall go on, that thou mayst see clearly the truth which is confused down there in such ambiguous teaching.[11] These beings, since they were made glad with God's face from which nothing is hid, have never turned their eyes from it, so that their sight is never intercepted by a new object and they have no need to recall the past by an abstract concept.[12] Thus down there men dream while awake, believing or not believing that they speak truth; but in the one case is the greater blame and shame. You below do not follow a single path in your philosophizing, so much does the love of show and the thought of it carry you away,[13] and even this is borne with less anger up here than when the divine Scripture is neglected or perverted. There is no thought among you what blood it cost to sow the world with it or how acceptable he is who approaches it with humbleness. Each tries for display, making his own inventions, and these are discoursed on by the preachers and the Gospel is silent. One says that at Christ's passion the moon turned back and interposed itself, so that the sun's light did not reach below; and others that the light itself hid itself and therefore for Spaniards and Indians, as for Jews, that eclipse took place.[14] Florence has not as many Lapo's and Bindo's[15] as tales like these that are proclaimed in the pulpit on all hands through the year, so that the poor sheep that know nothing return from pasture fed on wind; and not to see their loss does not excuse them.

Christ did not say to His first fellowship: "Go and preach idle tales to the world", but gave them a true foundation; and that alone sounded on their lips, so that in fighting to kindle the faith they made of the Gospel shield and spear. Now they go to preach with jests and gibes, and if only there is a good laugh the cowl inflates and they ask no more. But such a bird nests in the hood's tail[16] that if the people saw it they would see what pardons they are trusting to; from which such folly has grown on earth that with no warrant for it they will flock to every promise. By this the swine of Saint Anthony wax fat, with many others that are still more swinish, paying with unstamped coin.[17]

'But, since we have digressed enough, turn thine eyes now back to the straight road, that the way may be shortened with the time.

'This kind[18] mounts to such a number that no mortal speech or thought ever went so far, and if thou consider what is revealed by Daniel thou shalt see that in his thousands no determinate number is to be found.[19] The primal light that irradiates them all is received by them in as many ways as are the splendours with which it is joined, and therefore, since the affections follow the act of conceiving, love's sweetness glows variously in them, more and less. See now the height and the breadth of the Eternal Goodness, since it has made for itself so many mirrors in which it is broken, remaining in itself one as before.'

CANTO XXX

The ascent to the Empyrean; the river of light; the Celestial Rose

SOME six thousand miles away the sixth hour burns and already this world inclines its shadow almost to a level bed, when the mid-sky, deep above us, begins to change so that a star here and there is lost to sight at this depth; and as the brightest handmaid of the sun advances the sky then shuts off its lights one by one, even to the loveliest.[1] In like manner, the triumph that sports forever round the point which overcame me and which seems enclosed by that which it encloses[2] was extinguished little by little from my sight, so that my seeing nothing and my love constrained me to return with my eyes to Beatrice. If all that is said of her up to this were gathered in one meed of praise, it would be little to serve this turn; the beauty I saw not only surpasses our measures, but I surely believe that only its Maker has all the joy of it. I own myself beaten at this pass more than ever comic or tragic poet was baffled by a point in his theme; for, like the sun in the most wavering sight, the remembrance of the sweet smile deprives my mind of its very self. From the first day I saw

her face in this life until this sight the pursuit in my song has not been cut off; but now must my pursuit cease from following longer after her beauty in my verse, as with every artist at his limit.

Such that I leave her to a greater heralding than that of my trumpet which approaches the end of its hard theme, she began again with the voice and bearing of a guide whose task is done: 'We have come forth from the greatest body to the heaven that is pure light,[3]—light intellectual full of love, love of true good full of joy, joy that surpasses every sweetness. Here thou shalt see the one and the other soldiery of Paradise, and the one in that aspect in which thou shalt see them at the last judgement.'[4]

Like sudden lightning that scatters the visual spirits and deprives the eye of the action of the clearest objects,[5] a vivid light shone round about me and left me so swathed in the veil of its effulgence that nothing was visible to me.

'The love that calms this heaven always welcomes to itself with such a greeting, to prepare the candle for its flame.'[6] No sooner had these brief words reached my mind than I was conscious of rising beyond my own powers, and such new vision was kindled in me that there is no light so bright my eyes would not have borne it. And I saw light in the form of a river pouring its splendour between two banks painted with marvellous spring. From that torrent came forth living sparks and they settled on the flowers on either side, like rubies set

in gold; then, as if intoxicated with the odours, they plunged again into the wondrous flood, and as one entered another came forth.

'The high desire that is now aflame and urgent in thee to have knowledge of that which thou seest pleases me more the more it swells; but first thou must drink of these waters before this great thirst of thine can be satisfied.' Thus she spoke to me who was the sun of my eyes; then she continued: 'The river and the topazes that pass into it and out and the laughter of the flowers are shadowy forecasts of their truth; not that these things are imperfect in themselves, but the defect is in thyself, that thy vision is not yet so exalted.'

No infant, waking long after its hour, throws itself so instantly with its face to the milk, as I, to make still better mirrors of my eyes, bent down to the water that flows forth for our perfecting; and no sooner did the eaves of my eyelids drink of it than it seemed to me out of its length to have become round. Then, like people who have been under masks and seem other than before if they put off the semblance not their own in which they were hid, the flowers and the sparks changed for me into a greater festival, so that I saw both the courts of heaven made plain.

O splendour of God by which I saw the high triumph of the true kingdom, give me power to tell of what I saw there!

Light is there above which makes the Creator visible to every creature that has his peace only in seeing Him, and it spreads to so wide a circle that the circumference would be too great a girdle

for the sun. Its whole expanse is made by a ray reflected on the summit of the Primum Mobile, which draws from this its life and potency; and as a hillside is mirrored in water at its foot as if to see itself adorned when it is rich with grass and flowers, I saw, rising above the light all round in more than a thousand tiers, as many of us as have returned there above. And if the lowest rank encloses within it so great a light, what is the expanse of this rose in its farthest petals? My sight did not lose itself in the breadth and height, but took in all the extent and quality of that rejoicing; there, near and far neither add nor take away, for where God rules immediately natural law is of no effect.

Into the yellow of the eternal rose, which expands and rises in ranks and exhales odours of praise to the Sun that makes perpetual spring, Beatrice drew me, as one who is silent and fain would speak, and she said: 'Behold how great is the assembly of the white robes! See our city, how great is its circuit! See our seats so filled that few souls are now wanting there![7] And in that great chair on which thy eyes are held by the crown that is already set over it, before thou shalt sup at these nuptials shall rest the soul, which shall be imperial below, of lofty Henry, who shall come to set Italy straight before she is ready.[8] The blind greed that bewitches you has made you like the infant that is dying of hunger and drives away his nurse, and at that time one shall be president of the divine court who shall not take the same course with him openly and

secretly.[9] But not long shall God then suffer him in the holy office; for he shall be thrust down where Simon Magus gets his dues, and shall make him of Anagni go deeper still.'[10]

CANTO XXXI

The angels in the Rose; the ascent of Beatrice; St Bernard; the Virgin

In form, then, of a white rose was shown to me the saintly host which Christ, with His own blood, made His bride. But the other host—who, as they fly, see and sing the glory of Him who holds their love and the goodness that made them what they are,—like a swarm of bees that one moment dip in the flowers and the next go back where their toil turns to sweetness, descended into the great flower that is decked with so many petals, and thence re-ascended where their love abides forever. Their faces were all of living flame and their wings of gold; and, for the rest, they were of such whiteness as no snow would match. When they descended into the great flower they imparted to it, from rank to rank, of the peace and the ardour which they had gained fanning their sides. Nor did such plenitude of flight coming between the height and the flower obstruct the sight or the splendour; for the divine light penetrates the universe according to the fitness of its parts so that nothing can hinder it. This secure and joyful kingdom, thronged with people of old times and new, had sight and love all on one mark. O threefold Light, which, in a single star sparkling on their sight, so satisfiest them, look upon our tempest here below. If the

barbarians, coming from the region that is covered every day by Helice, wheeling with her son whom she delights in,[1] were struck dumb at the sight of Rome and her mighty works, when the Lateran rose above all mortal things,[2] I, who had come to the divine from the human, to the eternal from time, and from Florence to a people just and sane, with what amazement must I have been filled! Truly between that and the joy I was content to hear nothing and to remain silent. And like a pilgrim who is refreshed in the temple of his vow as he looks round it and hopes some time to tell of it again, so, taking my way up through the living light, I carried my eyes through the ranks, now up, now down, and now looking round again. I saw faces persuasive to charity, adorned with Another's light and with their own smiles, and every movement graced with dignity.

Already my glance had taken in the whole general form of Paradise but had not yet dwelt on any part of it, and I turned with new-kindled eagerness to question my Lady of things on which my mind was in suspense. One thing I intended, and another encountered me: I thought to see Beatrice, and I saw an old man, clothed like that glorious company. His eyes and his cheeks were suffused with a gracious gladness, and his aspect was of such kindness as befits a tender father. And 'Where is she?' I said in haste; and he replied: 'To end thy longing Beatrice sent me from my place; and if thou look up to the third circle from the highest tier thou shalt see her again, in the throne her merits have assigned to her.'

Without answering, I lifted up my eyes and saw her where she made for herself a crown, reflecting from her the eternal beams. From the highest region where it thunders no mortal eye is so far, were it lost in the depth of the sea, as was my sight there from Beatrice; but to me it made no difference, for her image came down to me undimmed by aught between.

'O Lady in whom my hope has its strength and who didst bear for my salvation to leave thy footprints in Hell, of all the things that I have seen I acknowledge the grace and the virtue to be from thy power and from thy goodness. It is thou who hast drawn me from bondage into liberty by all those ways, by every means for it that was in thy power. Preserve in me thy great bounty, so that my spirit, which thou hast made whole, may be loosed from the body well-pleasing to thee.' I prayed thus; and she, so far off as she seemed, smiled and looked at me, then turned again to the eternal fount.

And the aged saint said: 'In order that thou mayst complete thy journey to the very end, for which prayer and holy love have sent me, fly with thine eyes through this garden, for seeing it will prepare thy sight to mount higher through the divine radiance; and the Queen of Heaven, for whom I am all on fire with love, will grant us every grace, since I am her faithful Bernard.'[3]

Like one that comes, perhaps, from Croatia to see our Veronica[4] and whose old hunger is never satisfied, but he says within himself, as long as it is shown: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, very God, was this then your true semblance?', such was I, gazing

on the living charity of him who in this world tasted by contemplation of that peace.

'Child of grace,' he began 'this joyful state will not be known to thee if thou keep thine eyes only down here at the foot; but look at the circles up to the farthest till thou see in her seat the Queen to whom this realm is subject and devoted.'

I lifted up my eyes; and as in the morning the eastern part of the horizon outshines that where the sun goes down, so, as it were climbing with my eyes from valley to mountain-top, I saw a part of the extreme verge surpassing with its light all the rest of the rim; and as the point where we await the shaft that Phaeton misguided is most aflame and on this side and on that the light shades off,[5] so that peaceful oriflamme[6] showed brightest in the middle and on each side the flaming diminished equally. And at that middle point I saw more than a thousand angels with outspread wings making festival, each distinct in brightness and in function. I saw there, smiling at their sports and songs, a beauty which was joy in the eyes of all the other saints; and if I were as rich in speech as in imagining I should not dare attempt the least part of her delights. Bernard, who saw my eyes fixed and intent on the fire that warmed him, turned his own on her with so great affection that he made mine more eager in their gazing.

CANTO XXXII

The saints in the Rose; the children among the elect

ABSORBED in his delight, that contemplative freely undertook the office of a teacher and began with these holy words: 'The wound that Mary closed and anointed, she at her feet who is so fair it was that opened it and pierced it.[1] Below her, in the seats of the third row, sits Rachel with Beatrice, as thou seest. Sarah and Rebecca, Judith and her that was great-grandmother of the singer who, in grief for his sin, cried: "*Miserere mei*",[2] thou canst see, one thus below the other from rank to rank, as I, giving each her name, go down through the rose from petal to petal. And from the seventh grade, just as down to that point, follow Hebrew women, parting all the tresses of the flower. For these are the wall by which the sacred stairway is divided according to the look which their faith turned to Christ; on the one side, where the flower is in full bloom with all its petals, are seated those who believed in Christ yet to come,—on the other, where the half-circles are broken by vacant places, those who held their eyes on Christ already come. And

just as here the glorious seat of the Lady of Heaven and the other seats below it make that great division, so, opposite, does that of the great John, who, ever holy, bore the wilderness and martyrdom and, for two years, Hell;[3] and below him, continuing the division, were assigned Francis and Benedict and Augustine and others from circle to circle down to here. Behold now the depth of the divine foresight; for the one and the other aspect of the faith shall fill this garden equally. And note that downward from the grade which cuts midway the two dividing lines they have their seats for no merit of their own, but for that of others, under certain conditions; for all these are spirits released before they had real choice. This, indeed, thou mayst observe for thyself by their faces and also by their childish voices, if thou look well and listen to them.

'Now thou art perplexed and silent in thy perplexity; but I will loose the hard knot with which thy subtle thoughts are holding thee. In all the breadth of this kingdom nothing of chance can find a place any more than sorrow or thirst or hunger, for all thou seest is ordained by eternal law, so that here the ring exactly fits the finger; and therefore this company who were hastened to true life are not *sine causa*[4] higher and lower here among themselves. The King through whom this kingdom rests in such love and delight that desire can dare no farther, creating all minds in His glad sight, bestows His grace variously at His pleasure; and for this let the fact suffice. And it is

clearly and expressly noted for you in Holy Scripture in those twins who were moved to anger in their mother's womb. Therefore according to the colour of the hair given by such grace the supreme light must fittingly crown them.[5] Without merit for their doings, then, they are placed in different ranks, differing only in their original keenness of vision. In early times their parents' faith alone, with their own innocence, sufficed for their salvation; when the first ages were completed, male children must find strength for their innocent wings by circumcision; but when the time of grace was come such innocence, without the perfect baptism of Christ, was held there below.[6]

'Look now on the face that most resembles Christ, for only its brightness can fit thee to see Christ.'

I saw such gladness rain down upon her, borne in the holy minds created to fly through those heights, that all I had seen before had not held me in such wonder and suspense nor shown me such likeness to God, and that loving spirit which had first descended on her singing '*Ave Maria, gratia plena*'[7] spread his wings before her. On all sides the blessed court sang responses to the divine canticle, so that every face turned brighter for it.

'O holy father, who bearest for my sake to be here below, leaving the sweet place where by eternal lot thou hast thy seat, who is that angel that gazes with such rapture on the eyes of our Queen, so enamoured that he seems on fire?' Thus

I sought again the lessons of him who drew beauty from Mary as from the sun the morning star.

And he answered me: 'All confidence and gallant bearing that can be found in angel or in any soul are in him; and we would have it so, for it is he that brought the palm down to Mary when the Son of God would take on Himself the burden of our flesh.

'But follow my words now with thine eyes as I continue, and note the great nobles of this most just and merciful empire. These two who are seated there above, most happy to be so near the Empress, are as it were two roots of this rose: he that is beside her on the left is the father for whose rash tasting the human kind tastes such bitterness,—on the right see that ancient father of Holy Church to whom Christ committed the keys of this beauteous flower. And he who saw before he died all the grievous times of the fair bride that was won with the lance and the nails[8] sits beside him, and beside the other rests that leader under whom the thankless, fickle and stiff-necked people lived on manna. Opposite Peter see Anna sitting,[9] so well content to gaze on her daughter that she does not move her eyes while singing hosanna; and opposite the greatest father of a family sits Lucy, who sent thy Lady when thou didst bend thy brow downward to destruction.[10]

'But since the time flies that holds thee sleeping we shall stop here, like a good tailor that cuts his coat according to his cloth; and we shall direct our eyes to the Primal Love, so that, looking towards Him, thou mayst penetrate, as far as that

can be, into His effulgence. But lest perchance thou fall back, beating thy wings and thinking to advance, grace must be gained by prayer, grace from her who has power to help thee; and do thou follow me with thy love so that thy heart may not separate from my words.'

And he began this holy supplication:

CANTO XXXIII

St Bernard's prayer; the Beatific Vision

'VIRGIN Mother, daughter of thy Son, lowly and exalted more than any creature, fixed goal of the eternal counsel, thou art she who didst so ennoble human nature that its Maker did not disdain to be made its making. In thy womb was rekindled the love by whose warmth this flower has bloomed thus in the eternal peace; here thou art for us the noon-day torch of charity, and below among mortals thou art a living spring of hope. Thou, Lady, art so great and so prevailing that whoso would have grace and does not turn to thee, his desire would fly without wings. Thy loving-kindness not only succours him that asks, but many times it freely anticipates the asking;[1] in thee is mercy, in thee pity, in thee great bounty, in thee is joined all goodness that is in any creature. This man, who from the nethermost pit of the universe to here has seen one by one the lives of the spirits, now begs of thee by thy grace for such power that with his eyes he may rise still higher towards the last salvation; and I, who never burned for my own vision more than I do for his, offer to thee all my prayers, and pray that they come not short, that

by thy prayers thou wilt disperse for him every cloud of his mortality so that the supreme joy may be disclosed to him. This too I pray of thee, Queen, who canst what thou wilt, that thou keep his affections pure after so great a vision. Let thy guardianship control his human impulses. See Beatrice and so many of the blest who clasp their hands for my prayers.'

The eyes by God beloved and reverenced,[2] fixed on the suppliant, made plain to us how dear to her are devout prayers; then they were directed to the Eternal Light, into which it is not to be believed that any creature should penetrate with so clear an eye. And I, who was drawing near to the end of all desires, ended perforce the ardour of my craving. Bernard signed to me with a smile to look upward, but already of myself I was doing what he wished; for my sight, becoming pure, was entering more and more through the beam of the lofty light which in itself is true.[3]

From that moment my vision was greater than our speech, which fails at such a sight, and memory too fails at such excess. Like him that sees in a dream and after the dream the passion wrought by it remains and the rest returns not to his mind, such am I; for my vision almost wholly fades, and still there drops within my heart the sweetness that was born of it. Thus the snow loses its imprint in the sun; thus in the wind on the light leaves the Sibyl's oracle was lost.[4]

O Light Supreme that art so far exalted above mortal conceiving, grant to my mind again a little of what thou appearedst and give my tongue such

power that it may leave but a gleam of thy glory to the people yet to come;[5] for by returning somewhat to my memory and by sounding a little in these lines the better conceived will be thy victory.

I think, from the keenness I endured of the living ray, that I should have been dazzled if my eyes had been turned from it; and I remember that for this cause I was the bolder to sustain it until I reached with my gaze the Infinite Goodness. O abounding grace, by which I dared to fix my look on the Eternal Light so long that I spent all my sight upon it! In its depth I saw that it contained, bound by love in one volume, that which is scattered in leaves through the universe, substances and accidents and their relations[6] as it were fused together in such a way that what I tell of is a simple light. I think I saw the universal form of this complex,[7] because in telling of it I feel my joy expand. A single moment makes for me deeper oblivion than five and twenty centuries upon the enterprise that made Neptune wonder at the shadow of the Argo.[8] Thus my mind, all rapt, was gazing, fixed, still and intent, and ever enkindled with gazing. At that light one becomes such that it is impossible for him ever to consent that he should turn from it to another sight; for the good which is the object of the will is all gathered in it, and apart from it that is defective which there is perfect.[9]

Now my speech will come more short even of what I remember than an infant's who yet bathes his tongue at the breast. Not that the living light

at which I gazed had more than a single aspect—for it is ever the same as it was before—, but by my sight gaining strength as I looked, the one sole appearance, I myself changing, was, for me, transformed. In the profound and clear ground of the lofty light appeared to me three circles of three colours and of the same extent, and the one seemed reflected by the other as rainbow by rainbow, and the third seemed fire breathed forth equally from the one and the other.[10] O how scant is speech and how feeble to my conception! and this, to what I saw, is such that it is not enough to call it little. O Light Eternal, that alone abidest in Thyself, alone knowest Thyself, and, known to Thyself and knowing, lovest and smilest on Thyself![11] That circling which, thus begotten, appeared in Thee as reflected light, when my eyes dwelt on it for a time, seemed to me, within it and in its own colour, painted with our likeness, for which my sight was wholly given to it. Like the geometer who sets all his mind to the squaring of the circle[12] and for all his thinking does not discover the principle he needs, such was I at that strange sight. I wished to see how the image was fitted to the circle and how it has its place there; but my own wings were not sufficient for that, had not my mind been smitten by a flash wherein came its wish.[13] Here power failed the high phantasy;[14] but now my desire and will, like a wheel that spins with even motion, were revolved by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.

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